

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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## THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

PART THE SECOND. HARTWRIGHT'S NARRATIVE.  
VII.

WHEN I reached home again, after my interview with Mrs. Clements, I was struck by the appearance of a change in Laura.

The unvarying gentleness and patience which long misfortune had tried so cruelly and had never conquered yet, seemed now to have suddenly failed her. Insensible to all Marian's attempts to soothe and amuse her, she sat, with her neglected drawing pushed away on the table; her eyes resolutely cast down, her fingers twining and untwining themselves restlessly in her lap. Marian rose when I came in, with a silent distress in her face; waited for a moment, to see if Laura would look up at my approach; whispered to me, "Try if *you* can rouse her;" and left the room.

I sat down in the vacant chair; gently unclasped the poor, worn, restless fingers; and took both her hands in mine.

"What are you thinking of, Laura? Tell me, my darling—try and tell me what it is."

She struggled with herself, and raised her eyes to mine. "I can't feel happy," she said; "I can't help thinking—" She stopped, bent forward a little, and laid her head on my shoulder, with a terrible mute helplessness that struck me to the heart.

"Try to tell me," I repeated, gently; "try to tell me why you are not happy."

"I am so useless—I am such a burden on both of you," she answered, with a weary, hopeless sigh. "You work and get money, Walter; and Marian helps you. Why is there nothing I can do? You will end in liking Marian better than you like me—you will, because I am so helpless! Oh, don't, don't, don't treat me like a child!"

I raised her head, and smoothed away the tangled hair that fell over her face, and kissed her—my poor, faded flower! my lost, afflicted sister! "You shall help us, Laura," I said; "you shall begin, my darling, to-day."

She looked at me with a feverish eagerness, with a breathless interest, that made me tremble for the new life of hope which I had called into being by those few words.

I rose, and set her drawing materials in order, and placed them near her again.

"You know that I work and get money by drawing," I said. "Now you have taken such pains, now you are so much improved, you shall begin to work and get money, too. Try to finish this little sketch as nicely and prettily as you can. When it is done, I will take it away with me; and the same person will buy it who buys all that I do. You shall keep your own earnings in your own purse; and Marian shall come to you to help her, as often as she comes to me. Think how useful you are going to make yourself to both of us, and you will soon be as happy, Laura, as the day is long."

Her face grew eager, and brightened into a smile. In the moment while it lasted, in the moment when she again took up the pencils that had been laid aside, she almost looked like the Laura of past days. I had not misinterpreted the first signs of a new growth and strength in her mind, unconsciously expressing themselves in the notice she had taken of the occupations which filled her sister's life and mine, and in the inference that she had truly drawn from them for herself. Marian (when I told her what had passed) saw, as I saw, that she was longing to assume her own little position of importance, to raise herself in her own estimation and in ours—and, from that day, we tenderly helped the new ambition which gave promise of the hopeful, happier future, that might now not be far off. Her drawings, as she finished them, or tried to finish them, were placed in my hands; Marian took them from me and hid them carefully; and I set aside a little weekly tribute from my earnings, to be offered to her as the price paid by strangers for the poor, faint, valueless sketches, of which I was the only purchaser. It was hard sometimes to maintain our innocent deception, when she proudly brought out her purse to contribute her share towards the expenses, and wondered, with serious interest, whether I or she had earned the most that week. I have all those hidden drawings in my possession still: they are my treasures beyond price—the dear remembrances that I love to keep alive—the friends, in past adversity, that my heart will never part from, my tenderness never forget.

Am I trifling, here, with the necessities of my task? am I looking forward to the happier time which my narrative has not yet reached? Yes. Back again—back to the days of doubt and dread, when the spirit within me struggled hard

for its life, in the icy stillness of perpetual suspense. I have paused and rested for a while on the course which is leading me to the End. Is it time wasted, if the friends who read these pages have paused and rested too?

I took the first opportunity I could find of speaking to Marian in private, and of communicating to her the result of the inquiries which I had made that morning. She seemed to share the opinion on the subject of my proposed journey to Welmingham, which Mrs. Clements had already expressed to me.

"Surely, Walter," she said, "you hardly know enough yet to give you any hope of claiming Mrs. Catherick's confidence? Is it wise to proceed, to these extremities, before you have really exhausted all safer and simpler means of attaining your object? When you told me that Sir Percival and the Count were the only two people in existence who knew the exact date of Laura's journey, you forgot, and I forgot, that there was a third person who must surely know it—I mean Mrs. Rubelle. Would it not be far easier, and far less dangerous, to insist on a confession from her, than to force it from Sir Percival?"

"It might be easier," I replied; "but we are not aware of the full extent of Mrs. Rubelle's connivance and interest in the conspiracy; and we are therefore not certain that the date has been impressed on her mind, as it has been assuredly impressed on the minds of Sir Percival and the Count. It is too late, now, to waste the time on Mrs. Rubelle, which may be all-important to the discovery of the one assailable point in Sir Percival's life. Are you thinking a little too seriously, Marian, of the risk I may run in returning to Hampshire? Are you beginning to doubt whether Sir Percival Glyde may not, in the end, be more than a match for me?"

"He will not be more than your match," she replied, decidedly, "because he will not be helped in resisting you by the impenetrable wickedness of the Count."

"What has led you to that conclusion?" I asked, in some surprise.

"My own knowledge of Sir Percival's obstinacy and impatience of the Count's control," she answered. "I believe he will insist on meeting you single-handed—just as he insisted, at first, on acting for himself at Blackwater Park. The time for suspecting the Count's interference, will be the time when you have Sir Percival at your mercy. His own interests will then be directly threatened—and he will act, Walter, to terrible purpose, in his own defence."

"We may deprive him of his weapons, beforehand," I said. "Some of the particulars I have heard from Mrs. Clements may yet be turned to account against him; and other means of strengthening the case may be at our disposal. There are passages in Mrs. Michelson's narrative which show that the Count found it necessary to place himself in communication with Mr. Fairlie; and there may be circumstances which com-

promise him in that proceeding. While I am away, Marian, write to Mr. Fairlie, and say that you want an answer describing exactly what passed between the Count and himself, and informing you also of any particulars that may have come to his knowledge at the same time, in connexion with his niece. Tell him, in case he hesitates to comply, that the statement you request will, sooner or later, be insisted on, if he shows any reluctance to furnish you with it of his own accord."

"The letter shall be written, Walter. But, are you really determined to go to Welmingham?"

"Absolutely determined. I will devote the next two days to earning what we want for the week to come; and, on the third day, I go to Hampshire."

When the third day came, I was ready for my journey.

As it was possible that I might be absent for some little time, I arranged with Marian that we were to write to each other every day. As long as I heard from her regularly, I should assume that nothing was wrong. But if the morning came and brought me no letter, my return to London would take place, as a matter of course, by the first train. I contrived to reconcile Laura to my departure by telling her that I was going to the country to find new purchasers for her drawings and for mine; and I left her occupied and happy. Marian followed me down stairs to the street door.

"Remember what anxious hearts you leave here," she whispered, as we stood together in the passage; "remember all the hopes that hang on your safe return. If strange things happen to you on this journey; if you and Sir Percival meet—"

"What makes you think we shall meet?" I asked.

"I don't know—I have fears and fancies that I can't account for. Laugh at them, Walter, if you like—but, for God's sake, keep your temper, if you come in contact with that man!"

"Never fear, Marian! I answer for my self-control."

With these words we parted.

I walked briskly to the station. There was a glow of hope in me; there was a growing conviction in my mind that my journey, this time, would not be taken in vain. It was a fine, clear, cold morning; my nerves were firmly strung, and I felt all the strength of my resolution stirring in me vigorously from head to foot.

As I crossed the railway platform, and looked right and left among the people congregated on it, to search for any faces among them that I knew, the doubt occurred to me whether it might not have been to my advantage, if I had adopted a disguise, before setting out for Hampshire. But there was something so repellent to me in the idea—something so meanly like the common herd of spies and informers in the mere act of adopting a disguise—that I dismissed the question from consideration, almost as soon as it

had risen in my mind. Even as a mere matter of expediency the proceeding was doubtful in the extreme. If I tried the experiment at home, the landlord of the house would, sooner or later, discover me, and would have his suspicions aroused immediately. If I tried it away from home, the same persons might see me, by the commonest accident, with the disguise and without it; and I should, in that way, be inviting the notice and distrust which it was my most pressing interest to avoid. In my own character I had acted thus far—and in my own character I was resolved to continue to the end.

The train left me at Welmingham, early in the afternoon.

Is there any wilderness of sand in the deserts of Arabia, is there any prospect of desolation among the ruins of Palestine, which can rival the repelling effect on the eye, and the depressing influence on the mind, of an English country town, in the first stage of its existence, and in the transition state of its prosperity? I asked myself that question, as I passed through the clean desolation, the neat ugliness, the prim torpor of the streets of Welmingham. And the tradesmen who stared after me from their lonely shops; the trees that drooped helpless in their arid exile of unfinished crescents and squares; the dead house-carcases that waited in vain for the vivifying human element to animate them with the breath of life; every creature that I saw; every object that I passed—seemed to answer with one accord: The deserts of Arabia are innocent of our civilised desolation; the ruins of Palestine are incapable of our modern gloom!

I inquired my way to the quarter of the town in which Mrs. Catherick lived; and on reaching it found myself in a square of small houses, one story high. There was a bare little plot of grass in the middle, protected by a cheap wire fence. An elderly nursemaid and two children were standing in a corner of the enclosure, looking at a lean goat tethered to the grass. Two foot passengers were talking together on one side of the pavement before the houses, and an idle little boy was leading an idle little dog along by a string, on the other. I heard the dull tinkling of a piano at a distance, accompanied by the intermittent knocking of a hammer nearer at hand. These were all the sights and sounds of life that encountered me when I entered the square.

I walked at once to the door of Number Thirteen—the number of Mrs. Catherick's house—and knocked, without waiting to consider beforehand how I might best present myself when I got in. The first necessity was to see Mrs. Catherick. I could then judge, from my own observation, of the safest and easiest manner of approaching the object of my visit.

The door was opened by a melancholy, middle-aged woman servant. I gave her my card, and asked if I could see Mrs. Catherick. The card was taken into the front parlour; and the servant returned with a message requesting me to mention what my business was.

"Say, if you please, that my business relates to Mrs. Catherick's daughter," I replied. This was the best pretext I could think of, on the spur of the moment, to account for my visit.

The servant again retired to the parlour; again returned; and, this time, begged me, with a look of gloomy amazement, to walk in.

I entered a little room, with a flaring paper, of the largest pattern, on the walls. Chairs, tables, cheffonier, and sofa, all gleamed with the glutinous brightness of cheap upholstery. On the largest table, in the middle of the room, stood a smart Bible, placed exactly in the centre, on a red and yellow woollen mat; and at the side of the table nearest to the window, with a little knitting-basket on her lap, and a wheezing, blear-eyed old spaniel crouched at her feet, there sat an elderly woman, wearing a black net cap and a black silk gown, and having slate-coloured mittens on her hands. Her iron-grey hair hung in heavy bands on either side of her face; her dark eyes looked straight forward, with a hard, defiant, implacable stare. She had full, square cheeks; a long, firm chin; and thick, sensual, colourless lips. Her figure was stout and sturdy, and her manner aggressively self-possessed. This was Mrs. Catherick.

"You have come to speak to me about my daughter," she said, before I could utter a word on my side. "Be so good as to mention what you have to say."

The tone of her voice was as hard, as defiant, as implacable as the expression of her eyes. She pointed to a chair, and looked me all over attentively, from head to foot, as I sat down in it. I saw that my only chance with this woman was to speak to her in her own tone, and to meet her, at the outset of our interview, on her own ground.

"You are aware," I said, "that your daughter has been lost?"

"I am perfectly aware of it."

"Have you felt any apprehension that the misfortune of her loss might be followed by the misfortune of her death?"

"Yes. Have you come here to tell me she is dead?"

"I have."

"Why?"

She put that extraordinary question without the slightest change in her voice, her face, or her manner. She could not have appeared more perfectly unconcerned if I had told her of the death of the goat in the enclosure outside.

"Why?" I repeated. "Do you ask why I come here to tell you of your daughter's death?"

"Yes. What interest have you in me, or in her? How do you come to know anything about my daughter?"

"In this way. I met her on the night when she escaped from the Asylum; and I assisted her in reaching a place of safety."

"You did very wrong."

"I am sorry to hear her mother say so."

"Her mother does say so. How do you know she is dead?"

"I am not at liberty to say how I know it—but I *do* know it."

"Are you at liberty to say how you found out my address?"

"Certainly. I got your address from Mrs. Clements."

"Mrs. Clements is a foolish woman. Did she tell you to come here?"

"She did not."

"Then, I ask you again, why did you come?"

As she was determined to have the answer, I gave it to her in the plainest possible form.

"I came," I said, "because I thought Anne Catherick's mother might have some natural interest in knowing whether she was alive or dead."

"Just so," said Mrs. Catherick, with additional self-possession. "Had you no other motive?"

I hesitated. The right answer to that question was not easy to find, at a moment's notice.

"If you have no other motive," she went on, deliberately taking off her slate-coloured mittens, and rolling them up, "I have only to thank you for your visit; and to say that I will not detain you here, any longer. Your information would be more satisfactory if you were willing to explain how you became possessed of it. However, it justifies me, I suppose, in going into mourning. There is not much alteration necessary in my dress, as you see. When I have changed my mittens, I shall be all in black."

She searched in the pocket of her gown; drew out a pair of black-lace mittens; put them on with the stoniest and steadiest composure; and then quietly crossed her hands in her lap.

"I wish you good morning," she said.

The cool contempt of her manner irritated me into directly avowing that the purpose of my visit had not been answered yet.

"I *have* another motive in coming here," I said.

"Ah! I thought so," remarked Mrs. Catherick.

"Your daughter's death——"

"What did she die of?"

"Of disease of the heart."

"Yes? Go on."

"Your daughter's death has been made the pretext for inflicting serious injury on a person who is very dear to me. Two men have been concerned, to my certain knowledge, in doing that wrong. One of them is Sir Percival Glyde."

"Indeed?"

I looked attentively to see if she flinched at the sudden mention of that name. Not a muscle of her stirred—the hard, defiant, implacable stare in her eyes never wavered for an instant.

"You may wonder," I went on, "how the event of your daughter's death can have been made the means of inflicting injury on another person."

"No," said Mrs. Catherick; "I don't wonder at all. This appears to be your affair. You are interested in my affairs. I am not interested in yours."

"You may ask, then," I persisted, "why I mention the matter, in your presence."

"Yes: I *do* ask that."

"I mention it because I am determined to bring Sir Percival Glyde to account for the wickedness he has committed."

"What have I to do with your determination?"

"You shall hear. There are certain events in Sir Percival's past life which it is necessary to my purpose to be fully acquainted with. *You* know them—and for that reason, I come to *you*."

"What events do you mean?"

"Events which occurred at Old Welmingham, when your husband was parish-clerk at that place, and before the time when your daughter was born."

I had reached the woman at last, through the barrier of impenetrable reserve that she had tried to set up between us. I saw her temper smouldering in her eyes—as plainly as I saw her hands grow restless, then unclasp themselves, and begin mechanically smoothing her dress over her knees.

"What do you know of those events?" she asked.

"All that Mrs. Clements could tell me," I answered.

There was a momentary flush on her firm, square face, a momentary stillness in her restless hands, which seemed to betoken a coming outburst of anger that might throw her off her guard. But, no—she mastered the rising irritation; leaned back in her chair; crossed her arms on her broad bosom; and, with a smile of grim sarcasm on her thick lips, looked at me as steadily as ever.

"Ah! I begin to understand it all, now," she said; her tamed and disciplined anger only expressing itself in the elaborate mockery of her tone and manner. "You have got a grudge of your own against Sir Percival Glyde—and I must help you to wreak it. I must tell you this, that, and the other about Sir Percival and myself, must I? Yes, indeed? You have been prying into my private affairs. You think you have found a lost woman to deal with, who lives here on sufferance; and who will do anything you ask, for fear you may injure her in the opinions of the townspeople. I see through you and your precious speculation—I do! and it amuses me. Ha! ha!"

She stopped for a moment: her arms tightened over her bosom, and she laughed to herself—a slow, quiet, chuckling laugh.

"You don't know how I have lived in this place, and what I have done in this place, Mr. What's-your-name," she went on. "I'll tell you, before I ring the bell and have you shown out. I came here a wronged woman. I came here, robbed of my character, and determined to claim it back. I've been years and years about it—and I *have* claimed it back. I have matched the respectable people, fairly and openly, on their own ground. If they say anything against me, now, they must say it in secret: they can't say it, they daren't say it, openly. I stand high enough in this town, to be out of your reach. *The clergyman bows to me. Aha! you didn't bar-*



gain for that, when you came here. Go to the church, and inquire about me—you will find Mrs. Catherick has her sitting, like the rest of them, and pays the rent on the day it's due. Go to the town-hall. There's a petition lying there; a petition of the respectable inhabitants against allowing a Circus to come and perform here and corrupt our morals: yes! *OUR* morals. I signed that petition, this morning. Go to the bookseller's shop. The clergyman's Wednesday evening Lectures on Justification by Faith are publishing there by subscription—I'm down on the list. The doctor's wife only put a shilling in the plate at our last charity sermon—I put half-a-crown. Mr. Churchwarden Soward held the plate, and bowed to me. Ten years ago he told Pigrum, the chemist, I ought to be whipped out of the town, at the cart's tail. Is your mother alive? Has she got a better Bible on her table than I have got on mine? Does she stand better with her tradespeople than I do with mine? Has she always lived within her income? I have always lived within mine.—Ah! there *is* the clergyman coming along the square. Look, Mr. What's-your-name—look, if you please!"

She started up, with the activity of a young woman; went to the window; waited till the clergyman passed; and bowed to him solemnly. The clergyman ceremoniously raised his hat, and walked on. Mrs. Catherick returned to her chair, and looked at me with a grimmer sarcasm than ever.

"There!" she said. "What do you think of that for a woman with a lost character? How does your speculation look now?"

The singular manner in which she had chosen to assert herself, the extraordinary practical vindication of her position in the town which she had just offered, had so perplexed me, that I listened to her in silent surprise. I was not the less resolved, however, to make another effort to throw her off her guard. If the woman's fierce temper once got beyond her control, and once flamed out on me, she might yet say the words which would put the clue in my hands.

"How does your speculation look now?" she repeated.

"Exactly as it looked when I first came in," I answered. "I don't doubt the position you have gained in the town; and I don't wish to assail it, even if I could. I came here because Sir Percival Glyde is, to my certain knowledge, your enemy, as well as mine. If I have a grudge against him, you have a grudge against him, too. You may deny it, if you like; you may distrust me as much as you please; you may be as angry as you will—but, of all the women in England, you, if you have any sense of injury, are the woman who ought to help me to crush that man."

"Crush him for yourself," she said—"then come back here, and see what I say to you."

She spoke those words, as she had not spoken yet—quickly, fiercely, vindictively. I had stirred in its lair the serpent-hatred of years—but only for a moment. Like a lurking reptile, it leapt

up at me—as she eagerly bent forward towards the place in which I was sitting. Like a lurking reptile, it dropped out of sight again—as she instantly resumed her former position in the chair.

"You won't trust me?" I said.

"No."

"You are afraid?"

"Do I look as if I was?"

"You are afraid of Sir Percival Glyde."

"Am I?"

Her colour was rising, and her hands were at work again, smoothing her gown. I pressed the point farther and farther home—I went on, without allowing her a moment of delay.

"Sir Percival has a high position in the world," I said; "it would be no wonder if you were afraid of him. Sir Percival is a powerful man—a baronet—the possessor of a fine estate—the descendant of a great family—"

She amazed me beyond expression by suddenly bursting out laughing.

"Yes," she repeated, in tones of the bitterest, steadiest contempt. "A baronet—the possessor of a fine estate—the descendant of a great family. Yes, indeed! A great family—especially by the mother's side."

There was no time to reflect on the words that had just escaped her; there was only time to feel that they were well worth thinking over the moment I left the house.

"I am not here to dispute with you about family questions," I said. "I know nothing of Sir Percival's mother—"

"And you know as little of Sir Percival himself," she interposed, sharply.

"I advise you not to be too sure of that," I rejoined. "I know some things about him—and I suspect many more."

"What do you suspect?"

"I'll tell you what I *don't* suspect. I *don't* suspect him of being Anne's father."

She started to her feet, and came close up to me with a look of fury.

"How dare you talk to me about Anne's father! How dare you say who was her father, or who wasn't!" she broke out, her face quivering, her voice trembling with passion.

"The secret between you and Sir Percival is not *that* secret," I persisted. "The mystery which darkens Sir Percival's life was not born with your daughter's birth, and has not died with your daughter's death."

She drew back a step. "Go!" she said, and pointed sternly to the door.

"There was no thought of the child in your heart or in his," I went on, determined to press her back to her last defences. "There was no bond of guilty love between you and him, when you held those stolen meetings—when your husband found you whispering together under the vestry of the church."

Her pointing hand instantly dropped to her side, and the deep flush of anger faded from her face while I spoke. I saw the change pass over her; I saw that hard, firm, fearless, self-possessed woman quail under a terror which her

utmost resolution was not strong enough to resist—when I said those five last words, “the vestry of the church.”

For a minute, or more, we stood looking at each other in silence. I spoke first.

“Do you still refuse to trust me?” I asked.

She could not call the colour that had left it back to her face—but she had steadied her voice, she had recovered the defiant self-possession of her manner, when she answered me.

“I do refuse,” she said.

“Do you still tell me to go?”

“Yes. Go—and never come back.”

I walked to the door, waited a moment before I opened it, and turned round to look at her again.

“I may have news to bring you of Sir Percival, which you don’t expect,” I said; “and, in that case, I shall come back.”

“There is no news of Sir Percival that I don’t expect, except—”

She stopped; her pale face darkened; and she stole back, with a quiet, stealthy, cat-like step to her chair.

“Except the news of his death,” she said, sitting down again, with the mockery of a smile just hovering on her cruel lips, and the furtive light of hatred lurking deep in her steady eyes.

As I opened the door of the room, to go out, she looked round at me quickly. The cruel smile slowly widened her lips—she eyed me, with a strange, stealthy interest, from head to foot—an unutterable expectation showed itself wickedly all over her face. Was she speculating, in the secrecy of her own heart, on my youth and strength, on the force of my sense of injury and the limits of my self-control; and was she considering the lengths to which they might carry me, if Sir Percival and I ever chanced to meet? The bare doubt that it might be so, drove me from her presence, and silenced even the common forms of farewell on my lips. Without a word more, on my side or on hers, I left the room.

As I opened the outer door, I saw the same clergyman who had already passed the house once, about to pass it again, on his way back through the square. I waited on the door-step to let him go by, and looked round, as I did so, at the parlour window.

Mrs. Catherick had heard his footsteps approaching, in the silence of that lonely place; and she was on her feet at the window again, waiting for him. Not all the strength of all the terrible passions I had roused in that woman’s heart, could loosen her desperate hold on the one fragment of social consideration which years of resolute effort had just dragged within her grasp. There she was again, not a minute after I had left her, placed purposely in a position which made it a matter of common courtesy on the part of the clergyman to bow to her for a second time. He raised his hat, once more. I saw the hard, ghastly face behind the window, soften and light up with gratified pride; I saw the head with the grim black cap bend ceremoniously in return. The clergyman had bowed

to her—and in my presence—twice in one day!

The new direction which my inquiries must now take was plainly presented to my mind, as I left the house. Mrs. Catherick had helped me a step forward, in spite of herself. The next stage to be reached in the investigation was, beyond all doubt, the vestry of Old Welmingham church.

#### AN IMPORTANT MATTER.

A MOST important matter is the vaccine matter, which has now again become a subject of particular attention in this country. Small-pox recovers ground in England. The yearly mortality from this disease was trebled in the three years between fifty-five and fifty-nine. It is again dreaded in many districts as an epidemic. How does this happen? What are we to do? In discussing these questions we shall derive nearly all the facts we state, from an admirable pamphlet just published by DR. ALFRED COLLINSON, entitled “Small-pox and Vaccination Historically and Medically Considered.” Dr. Collinson has given his heart to a thorough study of the subject.

There can be no doubt that, until lately, secure in the enjoyment of a vast relief from the old rates of mortality, England, which gave vaccination to the world, and yet herself made a less perfect use of it than almost any other nation in Europe, was content with letting tolerably well alone. Now we are startled into some inquiry, and by help of the indefatigable medical officer of the Privy Council, Mr. Simon, who has brought together in three reports more practical truths about vaccination than any man before him, it is possible that the best course of action may be recognised and properly enforced.

It is easy enough to be content with even an imperfect gain that is so vast a gain, as the change from the old days when small-pox depopulated cities, and blinded or disfigured one-fourth of the human race—slaying, in Europe only, half a million of people every year—to the time when the chance of being seized with it is for no man a present dread. Let us glance back into history, and fairly understand what Jenner achieved. It is asserted and denied that small-pox was known to the old Greek physicians. Probably it was not known. But before the time of Hippocrates it was a disease known in India and China. In the sixth century it had reached Arabia, and is said to have been carried into that country by an Abyssinian army, which was attacked by it when besieging Mecca. The date of this incident corresponds nearly or exactly with that of the birth of Mahomet. In the reign of the Caliph Omar, small-pox was carried by the Saracens to Egypt. The Arabian physicians were the first who distinctly wrote of it, and Rhazes first of all; but Avicenna was the first of them by whom it was not confused with measles. Averroes, at the beginning of the thirteenth cen-

tury, was the first to add to what had previously been written, that a person can have small-pox only once. These Arabian physicians and philosophers represented in their time to Europe the science of the world. They professed that they had for small-pox so extraordinary a remedy that, though nine pustules had come out when it was administered, it would prevent the appearance of a tenth. They generally suffered for their knowledge. Averroes, a portly many-witted man, who could write love-songs as well as study mathematics, was once set by his sovereign bareheaded at the gate of a mosque, where all who entered might spit in his face. In those days it was not altogether to a man's advantage to be well informed.

The first case of small-pox recorded in Europe was that of Elfrida, daughter of Alfred the Great. Elfrida's grandson also died of this disease. Between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, small-pox was spread over Europe by the Crusaders: who won for themselves small-pox and leprosy, if they got nothing else, by their adventures in the East. In the reigns of our two first Edwards, small-pox in England was described by Gilbert and by John of Gaddesden, whose reputation Chaucer celebrates. John of Gaddesden, in his "*Rosa Anglica*," blends poetry with physic. He was a thriving genius, who got "good money from the barber surgeons" for a confection of tree frogs, and he was the first Englishman employed as Court physician. We are told how he treated the king's son when sick of small-pox. It is hard to say whether poetry or physic had inspired him, for his order was that the patient should be wrapped in scarlet, and that everything about the bed should be of a red colour. This, he says, made the prince recover, without having so much as one mark on his face.

The Spaniards took small-pox from Europe to America. It depopulated Mexico, by the annihilation of three millions and a half of people; they "perished in heaps," says Prescott. It was, as it always has proved, especially fatal among the dark-skinned races. A million of people (the whole native population) perished out of Hispaniola by the disease that was more murderous than war and famine. Still, in the sixteenth century, entire races of men were destroyed by it in the Brazils. It spread through Peru, sweeping away all the Indians and mulattoes in the cities of Potosi and De la Paz; it left the country desolate, and the mines were for a long time deserted. In North America, of twelve millions of Red men, six died by the sword, bayonet, and whisky; the other six by small-pox. A translation of the Bible having been made for the Six Nations, by the time it was finished there was not one left to read it, the whole nation having died of small-pox. The terrible disease devastated Siberia, Greenland, and Labrador, and made for three years a silent desert of the capital of Thibet. It killed two millions in a single year in Russia, and at Constantinople it destroyed one half of those on whom it seized. In France and Sweden, a tenth of the deaths

were by small-pox; in England, a fourteenth. It was small-pox, said Sir Gilbert Blane, that had blinded two in three of the applicants for relief to the Hospital for the Indigent Blind. Bernoulli believed that this disease swept away fifteen millions of human beings in every quarter of a century. In Europe alone it destroyed in a single century forty-five millions. As all climates were alike to it, so were all ranks. It shattered the constitution of our famous William the Third, destroyed his father, his mother, his wife, his uncle, and his two cousins.

Such were the terrors of the disease concerning which Lady Wortley Montague, wife of our ambassador at Constantinople, wrote in the year seventeen hundred and seventeen, in a letter from Turkey, "The small-pox, so fatal and so general amongst us, is here entirely harmless by the invention of Engrafting, which is the term they give it. Every year thousands undergo the operation, and the French ambassador says pleasantly, that they take the small-pox here by way of diversion, as they take the waters in other countries. There is no example of any one who has died of it, and you may believe I am well satisfied of the safety of this experiment, since I intend to try it on my dear little son. I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this useful invention into fashion in England." Four years afterwards, she had her daughter publicly inoculated in this country. One year after that, preliminary experiments upon six condemned criminals in Newgate having proved satisfactory, two children of Caroline, Princess of Wales, were inoculated. But the new practice met with strong opposition, and in that same year the Reverend Edward Massey preached that Job's distemper was the confluent small-pox, which he took from inoculation by the devil, who thus ranked as the father of inoculators.

It is a certain truth that the disease of small-pox, introduced by puncture through the skin, is less fatal than the same disease when taken through infection of the air. Where one in five or six died of the natural disease, there died but one in fifty—at the Inoculation Hospital only three in a thousand—of those upon whom it was thus engrafted. But to the nation at large inoculation was a scourge. It protected the inoculated person at the risk of all his neighbours; for, however mild the course of the disease in his own person, he became, while suffering from it, a centre of infection. Mild cases of small-pox were artificially multiplied among persons, many of whom never would have fallen in the way of natural infection; by these it was communicated naturally to others who would have escaped, and the whole mortality from small-pox which before inoculation had been seventy-four in a thousand, rose to ninety-five in a thousand after the introduction of that practice. Instead of a fourteenth, it became a tenth of the English population that now died of the disease, while the number increased at the same rate of those who recovered with the loss of one or both eyes, with impaired constitutions and disfigured features.

So the matter stood, when Jenner was apprentice to a village doctor, and paid special heed to the remark of a young country girl, that as she had taken a pock from the cows, small-pox would not hurt her. It had long been known, in the great dairy farms of Gloucestershire, that cows were affected with a pustular disease that could be transferred to those who milked them; and that persons by whom this cow-pox had been taken, were unhurt by exposure to the contagion of small-pox. In Sweden and Holstein, some slight practical notice was taken of the same fact while Jenner was pondering upon it. In seventeen 'seventy, when he became a pupil of John Hunter, he spoke of his thought and his great hope to that most eminent of teachers, and Hunter gave his usual advice: "Don't think, but try; be patient, be accurate." This advice Jenner followed, and by careful experiment tested his belief and elaborated the great life-saving truth that the matter of cow-pox can be propagated from one human being to another, and disseminated over the globe, to the total extinction of small-pox. He was giving up his life to study and toil in this direction. As the first to arrest and also to prove that the benefit of vaccination may be diffused from man to man, and that direct reference in every case to the disease of the cow is not at all necessary for complete protection, he especially acquired the claim he has on the world's gratitude. The horse, the cow, the sheep, the goat, and other animals, are liable to the same pustular disease. In seventeen 'eighty-nine, Jenner inoculated his eldest son with swine-pox matter, and he was afterwards inoculated with small-pox without any result. It has since been found that the disease of these quadrupeds is small-pox itself, modified by the constitution of the animal. It has been observed, like the small-pox in man, in every part of the world. The few pustules on the udders of cows in the Gloucestershire dairy farms, Jenner himself observed to have been produced by transfer of the matter on the hands of farm servants from the hoofs of horses affected with what was called the grease.

Jenner's discoveries were well received, only by the best men of his profession. In the first year of this nineteenth century he wrote that upwards of six thousand persons had been vaccinated with success. The practice was then already extending over the globe, and in the next year Jenner thought it "too manifest to admit of controversy, that the annihilation of the small-pox, the most dreadful scourge of the human species, must be the final result of this practice." A parliamentary committee investigated and reported on the new discovery, in terms of most emphatic approbation. A society, called the Royal Jennerian, was formed, with Jenner as its president, for the extermination of small-pox, and opened in London thirteen stations for the vaccination of the public. There were preachers who taught that the disease threatened with extinction had been a merciful gift of Providence for lessening the burden of a

poor man's family, and that it was impious to interfere with the Divine appointment. Ehrmann, of Frankfurt, quoted the prophets and the fathers of the Church, to prove that the vaccine matter was Antichrist. A child at Peckham was said to have been so changed in nature by the introduction into its system of matter taken from a cow, that it ran on all-fours, bellowed, and butted. Dr. Rowley published five hundred cases of the beastly new diseases produced from cow-pox, in a book illustrated by two coloured engravings of the Cow-poxed, or Ox-faced, Boy. In the sixth year of our century, the present Lord Lansdowne, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, moved that an inquiry into the state of vaccine inoculation should be obtained from the College of Physicians. The result was an inquiry by that college, followed by a report affirming the benefits of vaccination in the strongest terms. Parliament then, in the seventh year of our century, voted to Jenner, who had given life and fortune to the cause he espoused, thirty thousand pounds; and in the eighth year of the century the National Vaccine Establishment for public vaccination and gratuitous supply of matter, or lymph, was founded, with the support of an annual grant of two thousand pounds.

In the mean time, Jenner's essay, which embodied his discovery, had been translated into foreign languages, and had found its way to North America, where President Jefferson, with his own hand and the assistance of his sons-in-law, vaccinated nearly two hundred of his kindred and his neighbours. In the first year of the century, vaccination was already general in Spain, and two years afterwards the King of Spain fitted out an expedition for the conveyance of the discovery to all Spanish possessions beyond the seas. This expedition, under the conduct of Dr. Francis Xavier Balmis, spent three years in carrying the discovery entirely round the world.

In those days various experiments were made in various countries for the inoculation of the cow with human small-pox. Dr. Gassner, of Guntzburg, and Dr. Keile, of Kazan in Russia, succeeded in passing small-pox through the cow, back in vaccine matter to the human system. In Egypt, at a later period, the same was done; but it is Mr. Ceely, of Aylesbury, working, like Jenner, in the midst of the fatigues of practice, who has demonstrated with most patience and success that vaccine matter forming exactly the true cow-pox pustules, is obtained from cows inoculated with our small-pox. It has been observed, indeed, by the Vaccination Committee of the Medical Association that the pustules obtained by this matter have a more marked resemblance to the pustules described by Jenner himself than is common in those produced from the matter now in use.

The general result of the adoption of vaccination is, that where one now dies of it in Denmark, eleven used to die; where one now dies of it in Berlin and a large part of Austria, twenty used to die; and in Westphalia, five-and-twenty used to die. Even in the cases where from any par-



ticular cause small-pox is taken after vaccination, it is five or six times less dangerous than it would otherwise have been. The power of vaccination in exterminating small-pox, wholly consists in the fact that it is a small-pox which is not infectious. In some inscrutable way, passage through the lower organisation of the cow so alters the small-pox matter, that it will produce in the human body, only by immediate contact with the blood, a disorder of the mildest form, that may be borne at any age, in any state, and that shall not make the person touched with it a source of danger to those who come near. But there are certain conditions of successful vaccination. At the outset, the right sort of matter must be taken from the cow; for Jenner showed that the cow is liable to other pustular diseases which will communicate sores and raise vesicles not of the true form, and which give no protection against small-pox. Then, also, it should be taken only on the day when it is ripe, and from a pustule that has not been rubbed and broken. In taking it from the human body for dissemination, it is essential to observe this rule, and to observe also the rule that it must be taken from a healthy body, and especially from one that is not affected by a skin disease, for such disease will often modify the power of the vaccine matter. Absolute care in vaccination and universal adoption of it would have by this time fulfilled Jenner's utmost hope for the extinction of small-pox. What can be done is shown by the fact that for twenty years Sweden and Denmark were kept free from the disease. The Austrian government went so far as to order that no child should be admitted into any public school, have share in any public institution, or partake of the sacraments of the Church, unless he had been vaccinated. The care indicated by such exaggerated measures did succeed in the extirpation of small-pox for long periods.

But it is said that the vaccine lymph is enfeebled in power, by a long course of transmission from arm to arm. We have seen that the fresh lymph from the cow, obtained in our own day, reproduces more exactly than the matter commonly in use, the vaccine pustule described by Jenner, which so strongly fortified the constitution. Small-pox after vaccination, or the power to take vaccination twice, which represents a power to take small-pox after vaccination, is by a great deal more common than it used to be. There is annual vaccination in the Prussian army, and it is a most instructive fact that in the old soldiers who were vaccinated thirty or forty years ago, vaccination will seldom take a second time, while among the soldiers vaccinated during the last dozen years, second vaccination often has an ominous success. About twenty years ago, Mr. Estlin, whose evidence corresponds with that of many other witnesses, said of the Vaccine Institution of Glasgow, that "in forty-three trials made with lymph newly obtained from the cow, there had not been a single failure, whereas in the last preceding forty-three vaccinations made with a former lymph, there had been

failure in ten cases, and spurious or imperfect vesicles in nine others."

We may readily suppose that this degeneration of lymph does not arise from the mere act of transmission, but from the multiplication of the chances of imperfect vaccination hurtful to its quality, by the thousand and one vaccinators through whose hands it may have passed. Who can tell the pedigree of a pustule, or answer for the accidents interfering with the quality of matter that has been through many hundred systems? One ignorant or careless vaccinator who diffuses matter from the vaccinated arm of a child with skin disease, may cause the propagation of matter that shall give false confidence to hundreds of men. It is known that in the years seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen of the century, a vast number of vaccinations were made in different parts of Europe with inefficient lymph, and that persons vaccinated in those years have been found among the chief sufferers from small-pox.

In spite, therefore, of the contrary assertion of the National Vaccine Establishment, made six years ago, we must agree with Mr. Simon, Dr. Watson, and others, that well-devised arrangements for the periodical renewal of lymph would give greater certainty and permanence to the protection it affords.

The next requirement is, good vaccination. Vaccine matter must be taken for use from none but healthy bodies, always at the right time, and only from a perfect and true cow-pox vesicle, and by a vaccinator who has been taught to recognise its perfect form. No child is vaccinated properly, upon whose skin at least one vesicle is not allowed to run its whole natural course, unopened by the lancet and unbroken by rubbing. There is need also, of a full and accessible supply of the best vaccine matter, and of a good working system of compulsory vaccination. Give us these, and we may root out small-pox.

Having shown what we want, we may as well consider what we have. Until eighteen 'forty we had only the National Vaccine Establishment for public vaccination, and the free diffusion of the cow-pock matter. In eighteen 'forty, act of parliament declared that gratuitous vaccination, not to be considered parish relief, might be claimed of the local authorities in all parishes of England and Wales. For the three years before this law, the mortality from small-pox was seven hundred and seventy in a million; for the three years after this law, three hundred and four in a million. Still, more than five thousand persons, chiefly infants and children, perished of the disease every year. For this reason, in 'fifty-three, an act was passed to compel every child to be vaccinated within four months of its birth. At the registration of every birth, the registrar was to give notice of the legal obligation, and of the penalty for neglect. At first the act was readily obeyed, and deaths from small-pox fell to one hundred and fifty-two in the million. Then, it was found that nobody was charged with the enforcement of the law, or

with the recovery of penalties. Its coercive power was therefore at an end. This oversight has yet to be remedied.

The same act provided that none but qualified medical practitioners should be appointed by the parishes as public vaccinators. This was a gain. But the extension of the system of gratuitous vaccination has, of course, reduced very much the number of applicants for free vaccination to the National Vaccine Establishment; and, while the demand on that institution for supplies of lymph has greatly increased, the source of its lymph has been drying up, and its power of selection has been, of course, proportionately restricted. The vaccination stations in the great towns are now, therefore, beginning to contribute supplies to the central establishment, of which lymph is to be obtained by every proper applicant.

Most important of all, is a new use made of the large vaccine stations that have been formed. By a notification from the privy council, public vaccinators in the towns which contain medical schools are authorised to instruct students and give certificates of their proficiency. After the first day of the present year, except in certain stated cases, no person was to be contracted with for vaccination of the public, without evidence that he had been taught and examined by some public vaccinator authorised by the privy council for that purpose.

Our present wants, therefore, are but two: firstly, some measure for the renewal of the vaccine matter: secondly, a system of compulsory vaccination that will include provision for the actual enforcement of its penalties.

#### THE UNFINISHED POEM.

TAKE it, reader—idly passing  
This, like hundred other lines;  
Take it, critic, great at classing  
Subtle genius' well-known sign.  
But, O reader! be thou dumb;  
Critic, let no keen wit come;  
For the hand that wrote or blurr'd  
Will not write another word,  
And the soul you scorn or prize  
Now than angels is more wise.  
Take it, heart of man or woman,  
This unfinished, broken strain,  
Whether it be poor and common,  
Or the noblest work of brain;  
Let that reverent heart sole sit  
Here in judgment over it,  
Tenderly, as you would read  
(Any one, of any creed,  
Any churchyard walking by),  
"Sacred to the memory."

Wholly sacred: even as lingers  
Final word, or light glance cast,  
Or last clasp of life-warm fingers  
That we knew not was the last;  
Wholly sacred—as we lay,  
The day after funeral day,  
Their dear relics, great or small,  
Who need nothing, yet have all—  
All the best of us, that lies  
Hid with them in Paradise;

All our highest aspirations,  
And our closest love of loves:  
Our most silent resignations,  
Our best work that man approves;  
Yet which jealously we keep  
In our mute soul's deepest deep.  
So of this imperfect song  
Let no echoes here prolong;  
For the singer's voice is known  
In the heaven of heavens alone.

#### THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

It lately happened that I found myself rambling about the scenes among which my earliest days were passed; scenes from which I departed when I was a child, and which I did not revisit until I was a man. This is no uncommon chance, but one that befalls some of us any day; perhaps it may not be quite uninteresting to compare notes with the reader respecting an experience so familiar and a journey so uncommercial.

I will call my boyhood's home (and I feel like a Tenor in an English Opera when I mention it) Dullborough. Most of us come from Dullborough who come from a country town.

As I left Dullborough in the days when there were no railroads in the land, I left it in a stage-coach. Through all the years that have since passed, have I ever lost the smell of the damp straw in which I was packed—like game—and forwarded, carriage paid, to the Cross Keys, Wood-street, Cheapside, London? There was no other inside passenger, and I consumed my sandwiches in solitude and dreariness, and it rained hard all the way, and I thought life sloppier than I had expected to find it.

With this tender remembrance upon me, I was cavalierly shunted back into Dullborough the other day, by train. My ticket had been previously collected, like my taxes, and my shining new portmanteau had had a great plaster stuck upon it, and I had been defied by Act of Parliament to offer an objection to anything that was done to it, or me, under a penalty of not less than forty shillings or more than five pounds, compoundable for a term of imprisonment. When I had sent my disfigured property on to the hotel, I began to look about me; and the first discovery I made, was, that the Station had swallowed up the playing-field.

It was gone. The two beautiful hawthorn-trees, the hedge, the turf, and all those buttercups and daisies, had given place to the stoniest of jolting roads; while, beyond the Station, an ugly dark monster of a tunnel kept its jaws open, as if it had swallowed them and were ravenous for more destruction. The coach that had carried me away, was melodiously called Timpson's Blue-Eyed Maid, and belonged to Timpson, at the coach-office up-street; the locomotive engine that had brought me back, was called severely No. 97, and belonged to S. E. R., and was spitting ashes and hot-water over the blighted ground.

When I had been let out at the platform-door,

like a prisoner whom his turnkey grudgingly released, I looked in again over the low wall, at the scene of departed glories. Here, in the haymaking time, had I been delivered from the dungeons of Seringapatam, an immense pile (of haycock), by my countrymen, the victorious British (boy next door and his two cousins), and had been recognised with ecstasy by my affianced one (Miss Green), who had come all the way from England (second house in the terrace) to ransom me, and marry me. Here had I first heard in confidence, from one whose father was greatly connected, being under Government, of the existence of a terrible banditti, called "The Radicals," whose principles were, that the Prince Regent wore stays, and that nobody had a right to any salary, and that the army and navy ought to be put down—horrors at which I trembled in my bed, after supplicating that the Radicals might be speedily taken and hanged. Here, too, had we, the small boys of Boles's, had that cricket match against the small boys of Coles's, when Boles and Coles had actually met upon the ground, and when, instead of instantly hitting out at one another with the utmost fury, as we had all hoped and expected, those sneaks had said respectively, "I hope Mrs. Boles is well," and "I hope Mrs. Coles and the baby are doing charmingly." Could it be that, after all this, and much more, the Playing-field was a Station, and No. 97 expectorated boiling-water and red-hot cinders on it, and the whole belonged by Act of Parliament to S. E. R.?

As it could be, and was, I left the place with a heavy heart for a walk all over the town. And first of Timpson's, up-street. When I departed from Dullborough in the strawy arms of Timpson's Blue-Eyed Maid, Timpson's was a moderate-sized coach-office (in fact, a little coach-office), with an oval transparency in the window, which looked beautiful by night, representing one of Timpson's coaches in the act of passing a milestone on the London road with great velocity, completely full inside and out, and all the passengers dressed in the first style of fashion, and enjoying themselves tremendously. I found no such place as Timpson's now—no such bricks and rafters, not to mention the name—no such edifice on the teeming earth. Pickford had come and knocked Timpson's down. Pickford had not only knocked Timpson's down, but had knocked two or three houses down on each side of Timpson's, and then had knocked the whole into one great establishment, with a pair of big gates, in and out of which, his (Pickford's) waggon are, in these days, always rattling, with their drivers sitting up so high, that they look in at the second floor windows of the old fashioned houses in the High-street as they shake the town. I have not the honour of Pickford's acquaintance, but I felt that he had done me an injury, not to say committed an act of byslaughter, in running over my childhood in this rough manner; and if ever I meet Pickford driving one of his own monsters, and smoking a pipe the while (which is the custom of his men), he shall know

by the expression of my eye, if it catches his, that there is something wrong between us.

Moreover, I felt that Pickford had no right to come rushing into Dullborough and deprive the town of a public picture. He is not Napoleon Bonaparte. When he took down the transparent stage-coach, he ought to have given the town a transparent van. With a gloomy conviction that Pickford is wholly utilitarian and unimaginative, I proceeded on my way.

It is a mercy I have not a red and green lamp and a night-bell at my door, for in my very young days I was taken to so many lyings-in that I wonder I escaped becoming a professional martyr to them in after-life. I suppose I had a very sympathetic nurse, with a large circle of married acquaintance. However that was, as I continued my walk through Dullborough, I found many houses to be solely associated in my mind with this particular interest. At one little greengrocer's shop, down certain steps from the street, I remembered to have waited on a lady who had had four children (I am afraid to write five, though I fully believe it was five) at a birth. This meritorious woman held quite a Reception in her room on the morning when I was introduced there, and the sight of the house brought vividly to my mind how the four (five) deceased young people lay, side by side, on a clean cloth on a chest of drawers: reminding me by a homely association, which I suspect their complexion to have assisted, of pigs' feet as they are usually displayed at a neat tripe-shop. Hot caudle was handed round on the occasion, and I further remembered as I stood contemplating the greengrocer's, that a subscription was entered into among the company, which became extremely alarming to my consciousness of having pocket-money on my person. This fact being known to my conductress, whoever she was, I was earnestly exhorted to contribute, but resolutely declined: therein disgusting the company, who gave me to understand that I must dismiss all expectations of going to Heaven.

How does it happen that when all else is change wherever one goes, there yet seem, in every place, to be some few people who never alter? As the sight of the greengrocer's house recalled these trivial incidents of long ago, the identical greengrocer appeared on the steps, with his hands in his pockets, and leaning his shoulder against the door-post, as my childish eyes had seen him many a time; indeed, there was his old mark on the door-post yet, as if his shadow had become a fixture there. It was he himself; he might formally have been an old-looking young man, or he might now be a young-looking old man, but there he was. In walking along the street, I had as yet looked in vain for a familiar face, or even a transmitted face; here was the very greengrocer who had been weighing and handling baskets on the morning of the reception. As he brought with him a dawning remembrance that he had had no proprietary interest in those babies, I crossed the road, and accosted him on the subject. He was not in the least excited or

gratified or in any way roused, by the accuracy of my recollection, but said, Yes, summat out of the common—he didn't remember how many it was (as if half a dozen babes either way made no difference)—had happened to a Mrs. What's-her-name, as once lodged there—but he didn't call it to mind, particular. Nettled by this phlegmatic conduct, I informed him that I had left the town when I was a child. He slowly returned, quite unsoftened and not without a sarcastic kind of complacency, *Had I?* Ah! And did I find it had got on tolerable well without me? Such is the difference (I thought, when I had left him a few hundred yards behind, and was by so much in a better temper) between going away from a place and remaining in it. I had no right, I reflected, to be angry with the greengrocer for his want of interest. I was nothing to him: whereas he was the town, the cathedral, the bridge, the river, my childhood, and a large slice of my life, to me.

Of course the town had shrunk fearfully, since I was a child there. I had entertained the impression that the High-street was at least as wide as Regent-street, London, or the Italian Boulevard at Paris. I found it little better than a lane. There was a public clock in it, which I had supposed to be the finest clock in the world; whereas it now turned out to be as inexpressive, moon-faced, and weak a clock as ever I saw. It belonged to a Town Hall, where I had seen an Indian (who I now suppose wasn't an Indian) swallow a sword (which I now suppose he didn't). This edifice had appeared to me in those days so glorious a structure, that I had set it up in my mind as the model on which the Genie of the Lamp built the palace for Aladdin. A mean little brick heap, like a demented chapel, with a few yawning persons in leather gaiters, and in the last extremity for something to do, lounging at the door with their hands in their pockets, and calling themselves a Corn Exchange!

The Theatre was in existence, I found, on asking the fishmonger, who had a compact show of stock in his window, consisting of a sole and a quart of shrimps—and I resolved to comfort my mind by going to look at it. Richard the Third, in a very uncomfortable cloak, had first appeared to me there, and had made my heart leap with terror by backing up against the stage-box in which I was posted, while struggling for life against the virtuous Richmond. It was within those walls that I had learnt, as from a page of English history, how that wicked King slept in war-time on a sofa much too short for him, and how fearfully his conscience troubled his boots. There, too, had I first seen the funny countryman, but countryman of noble principles in a flowered waistcoat, crunch up his little hat and throw it on the ground, and pull off his coat, saying "Dom thee, squire, coom on with thy fistes then!" At which the lovely young woman who kept company with him (and who went out gleanng, in a narrow white muslin apron with five beautiful bars of five different coloured ribbons across it) was so frightened for

his sake, that she fainted away. Many wondrous secrets of Nature had I come to the knowledge of in that sanctuary: of which not the least terrific were, that the witches in Macbeth bore an awful resemblance to the Thanes and other proper inhabitants of Scotland; and that the good King Duncan couldn't rest in his grave, but was constantly coming out of it, and calling himself somebody else. To the Theatre, therefore, I repaired for consolation. But I found very little, for it was in a bad and a declining way. A dealer in wine and bottled beer had already squeezed his trade into the box-office, and the theatrical money was taken—when it came—in a kind of meat-safe in the passage. The dealer in wine and bottled beer must have insinuated himself under the stage too; for he announced that he had various descriptions of alcoholic drinks "in the wood," and there was no possible stowage for the wood anywhere else. Evidently, he was by degrees eating the establishment away to the core, and would soon have sole possession of it. It was To Let, and hopelessly so, for its old purposes; and there had been no entertainment within its walls for a long time, except a Panorama; and even that had been announced as "pleasingly instructive," and I knew too well the fatal meaning and the leaden import of those terrible expressions. No, there was no comfort in the Theatre. It was mysteriously gone, like my own youth. Unlike my own youth, it might be coming back some day; but there was little promise of it.

As the town was placarded with references to the Dullborough Mechanics' Institution, I thought I would go and look at that establishment next. There had been no such thing in the town, in my young day, and it occurred to me that its extreme prosperity might have brought adversity upon the Drama. I found the Institution with some difficulty, and should scarcely have known that I had found it if I had judged from its external appearance only; but this was attributable to its never having been finished, and having no front: consequently, it led a modest and retired existence up a stable-yard. It was (as I learnt, on inquiry) a most flourishing Institution, and of the highest benefit to the town: two triumphs which I was glad to understand were not at all impaired by the seeming drawbacks that no mechanics belonged to it, and that it was steeped in debt to the chimney-pots. It had a large room, which was approached by an infirm step-ladder: the builder having declined to construct the intended staircase, without a present payment in cash, which Dullborough (though so profoundly appreciative of the Institution) seemed unaccountably bashful about subscribing. The large room had cost—or would, when paid for—five hundred pounds; and it had more mortar in it and more echoes, than one might have expected to get for the money. It was fitted up with a platform, and the usual lecturing tools, including a large black board of a menacing appearance. On referring to lists of the courses of lectures that had been given in this thriving Hall, I fancied I detected a

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shyness in admitting that human nature when at leisure has any desire whatever to be relieved and diverted; and a furtive sliding in of any poor make-weight piece of amusement, shamefacedly and edgewise. Thus, I observed that it was necessary for the members to be knocked on the head with Gas, Air, Water, Food, the Solar System, the Geological periods, Criticism on Milton, the Steam-engine, John Bunyan, and Arrow-Headed Inscriptions, before they might be tickled by those unaccountable choristers, the negro singers in the court costume of the reign of George the Second. Likewise, that they must be stunned by a weighty inquiry whether there was internal evidence in SHAKESPEARE'S works, to prove that his uncle by the mother's side lived for some years at Stoke Newington, before they were brought-to by a Miscellaneous Concert. But indeed the masking of entertainment, and pretending it was something else—as people mask bedsteads when they are obliged to have them in sitting-rooms, and make believe that they are book-cases, sofas, chests of drawers, anything rather than bedsteads—was manifest even in the pretence of dreariness that the unfortunate entertainers themselves felt obliged in decency to put forth when they came here. One very agreeable professional singer who travelled with two professional ladies, knew better than to introduce either of those ladies to sing the ballad "Comin' through the Rye" without prefacing it himself, with some general remarks on wheat and clover; and even then, he dared not for his life call the song, a song, but disguised it in the bill as an "Illustration." In the library, also—fitted with shelves for three thousand books, and containing upwards of one hundred and seventy (presented copies mostly) seething their edges in damp plaster—there was such a painfully apologetic return of 62 offenders who had read Travels, Popular Biography, and mere Fiction descriptive of the aspirations of the hearts and souls of mere human creatures like themselves; and such an elaborate parade of 2 bright examples who had had down Euclid after the day's occupation and confinement; and 3 who had had down Metaphysics after ditto; and 1 who had had down Theology after ditto; and 4 who had worried Grammar, Political Economy, Botany, and Logarithms all at once after ditto; that I suspected the boasted class to be one man, who had been hired to do it.

Emerging from the Mechanics' Institution and continuing my walk about the town, I still noticed everywhere the prevalence, to an extraordinary degree, of this custom of putting the natural demand for amusement out of sight, as some untidy housekeepers put dust, and pretending that it was swept away. And yet it was ministered to, in a dull and abortive manner, by all who made this feint. Looking in at what is called in Dullborough "the serious bookseller's," where, in my childhood, I had studied the faces of numbers of gentlemen depicted in rostrums with a gaslight on each side of them, and casting my eyes over the open pages of certain printed discourses there, I found a vast

deal of aiming at jocosity and dramatic effect, even in them—yes, verily, even on the part of one very wrathful expounder who bitterly anathematised a poor little Circus. Similarly, in the reading provided for the young people enrolled in the Lasso of Love, and other excellent unions, I found the writers generally under a distressing sense that they must start (at all events) like story-tellers, and delude the young persons into the belief that they were going to be interesting. As I looked in at this window for twenty minutes by the clock, I am in a position to offer a friendly remonstrance—not bearing on this particular point—to the designers and engravers of the pictures in those publications. Have they considered the awful consequences likely to flow from their representations of Virtue? Have they asked themselves the question, whether the terrific prospect of acquiring that fearful chubbiness of head, unwieldiness of arm, feeble dislocation of leg, crispness of hair, and enormity of shirt-collar, which they represent as inseparable from Goodness, may not tend to confirm sensitive waverers, in Evil? A most impressive example (if I had believed it) of what a Dustman and a Sailor may come to, when they mend their ways, was presented to me in this same shop-window. When they were leaning (they were intimate friends) against a post, drunk and reckless, with surpassingly bad hats on, and their hair over their foreheads, they were rather picturesque, and looked as if they might be agreeable men if they would not be beasts. But when they had got over their bad propensities, and when, as a consequence, their heads had swelled alarmingly, their hair had got so curly that it lifted their blown-out cheeks up, their coat-cuffs were so long that they never could do any work, and their eyes were so wide open that they never could do any sleep, they presented a spectacle calculated to plunge a timid nature into the depths of Infamy.

But, the clock that had so degenerated since I saw it last, admonished me that I had stayed here long enough; and I resumed my walk again.

I had not gone fifty paces along the street when I was suddenly brought up by the sight of a man who got out of a little phaeton at the doctor's door, and went into the doctor's house. Immediately, the air was filled with the scent of trodden grass, and the perspective of years opened, and at the end of it was a little likeness of this man keeping a wicket, and I said, "God bless my soul! Joe Specks!"

Through many changes and much work, I had preserved a tenderness for the memory of Joe, forasmuch as we had made the acquaintance of Roderick Random together, and had believed him to be no ruffian, but an ingenuous and engaging hero. Scorning to ask the boy left in the phaeton whether it was really Joe, and scorning even to read the brass plate on the door—so sure was I—I rang the bell and informed the servant maid that a stranger sought audience of Mr. Specks. Into a room, half surgery, half study, I was shown to await his coming, and I

found it, by a series of elaborate accidents, bestrewn with testimonies to Joe. Portrait of Mr. Specks, bust of Mr. Specks, silver cup from grateful patient to Mr. Specks, presentation sermon from local clergyman, dedication poem from local poet, dinner-card from local nobleman, tract on balance of power from local refugee, inscribed *Hommage de l'auteur à Specks*.

When my old schoolfellow came in, and I informed him with a smile that I was not a patient, he seemed rather at a loss to perceive any reason for smiling in connexion with that fact, and inquired to what was he to attribute the honour? I asked him, with another smile, could he remember me at all? He had not (he said) that pleasure. I was beginning to have but a poor opinion of Mr. Specks, when he said, reflectively, "And yet there's a something, too." Upon that, I saw a boyish light in his eyes that looked well, and I asked him if he could inform me, as a stranger who desired to know and had not the means of reference at hand, what the name of the young lady was, who married Mr. Random? Upon that, he said "Narcissa," and, after staring for a moment, called me by my name, shook me by the hand, and melted into a roar of laughter. "Why, of course you'll remember Lucy Green," he said, after we had talked a little. "Of course," said I. "Whom do you think she married?" said he. "You?" I hazarded. "Me," said Specks, "and you shall see her." So I saw her, and she was fat, and if all the hay in the world had been heaped upon her, it could scarcely have altered her face more than Time had altered it from my remembrance of the face that had once looked down upon me into the fragrant dungeons of Seringapatam. But when her youngest child came in after dinner (for I dined with them, and we had no other company than Specks, Junior, Barrister-at-Law, who went away as soon as the cloth was removed, to look after the young lady to whom he was going to be married next week), I saw again, in that little daughter, the little face of the hayfield, unchanged, and it quite touched my heart. We talked immensely, Specks and Mrs. Specks, and I, and we spoke of our old selves as though our old selves were dead and gone, and indeed indeed they were—dead and gone, as the playing-field that had become a wilderness of rusty iron, and the property of S. E. R.

Specks, however, illuminated Dulborough with the rays of interest that I wanted and should otherwise have missed in it, and linked its present to its past, with a highly agreeable chain. And in Specks's society I had new occasion to observe what I had before noticed in similar communications among other men. All the schoolfellows and others of old, whom I inquired about, had either done superlatively well or superlatively ill—had either become uncertificated bankrupts, or been felonious and got themselves transported; or had made great hits in life, and done wonders. And this is so commonly the case, that I never can imagine what becomes of all the mediocre people of people's youth—especially, considering that we

find no lack of the species in our maturity. But I did not propound this difficulty to Specks, for no pause in the conversation gave me an occasion. Nor could I discover one single flaw in the good doctor—when he reads this, he will receive in a friendly spirit the pleasantly meant record—except that he had forgotten his Roderick Random, and that he confounded Strap with Lieutenant Hatchway: who never knew Random, howsoever intimate with Pickle.

When I went alone to the Railway to catch my train at night (Specks had meant to go with me, but was inopportunately called out), I was in a more charitable mood with Dulborough than I had been all day; and yet in my heart I had loved it all day too. Ah! who was I that I should quarrel with the town for being changed to me, when I myself had come back, so changed, to it! All my early readings and early imaginations dated from this place, and I took them away so full of innocent construction and guileless belief, and I brought them back so worn and torn, so much the wiser and so much the worse!

## BLACK TARN.

### IN THREE PORTIONS. CHAPTER VII.

MRS. LAURENCE GRANTLEY had disappeared. The country was searched for miles round, but not a trace of her was to be found. No one had called the day after the ball; her maid had dressed her for a walk, and she had been seen to leave the Hall grounds by the small side gate; the steward had met her in the lane, a dozen yards from the gate; from this point even conjecture was at a loss. The affair made an intense sensation, and people were dreadfully shocked and alarmed—as they always are when there is anything mysterious. Much sympathy was felt for the husband, and much pity was expressed for the wife: all her good points were remembered and magnified, and all her bad forgotten. A veil of universal charity shadowed the Hall from basement to roof. But still the mystery remained unsolved: what had become of her?

Laurence kept much in the house, was very silent and moody and subdued, and the neighbourhood wondered that he should take his affliction so much to heart; for however tragically it might have happened, it seemed unlike Laurence Grantley to fret himself ill for the loss of his wife. It was matter of history that they had not been violently happy in their union, and his distress seemed to every one disproportioned to the event. The gentlemen of the neighbourhood rode daily up to the Hall to offer advice and sympathy, but no plan yet proposed had resulted in any certainty; the body had not been found, and there were no tidings of flight. It was a desolate state of things, every one agreed; and the most terrible certainty would be preferable to dragging on in doubt and suspense.

One day, there chanced to be quite a meeting at the Hall. Dr. Downs, the clergyman, and

one or two more gentlemen, had congregated there, discussing various plans with Laurence as to what had better be done, when the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard, and Clarke Jones galloped up to the door.

When Laurence heard his voice, he rose and left the room hastily. The doctor remarked how ill he looked, as he went out; and one of the gentlemen, notorious for his attachment to his wife, sighed, "Poor fellow!" while another, who was as notoriously ill-mated, gave a short laugh as he said, "I should not have thought Grantley would have taken his wife's death so much to heart."

Clarke Jones entered, and bowed with clumsy familiarity to the company. "Fine winter's morning, gentlemen!" he said, unbuttoning his coat, and flinging it open at the chest.

"Very fine," says bland Dr. Downs, in his conciliatory voice. Then there was a pause.

Clarke Jones was not much liked by the gentry of the place. They thought him vulgar, pushing, insolent, with a grip like a vice when once it closed over any one's affairs, and an offensive manner of shouldering his way into places where he was not wanted. They looked coldly at the lawyer, and wondered what business he could have up here, and wondered, most of all, how such a proud man as Laurence Grantley could receive him so much like a friend. The clergyman himself, representing charity and social brotherhood as he did, would not have admitted him into his drawing-room, and Dr. Downs had never allowed his acquaintance to overflow the pestle and mortar. Yet here he was at the Hall—had been a guest at the great ball, and was now one of the foremost in offering sympathy, perhaps advice. Well! there are strange things in this world!

The pause was becoming awkward; when Laurence returned. He had lost the deadly pallor which the doctor had noticed when he left the room, and was quite himself again; only with a fixed and strained expression, as if strung up to do a certain work, for which he had been gathering strength. He met Clarke Jones with cordiality, shook hands with him, spoke to him in a friendly, almost familiar, manner, invited him to be seated, and presented him to those of the guests who he thought were unacquainted with him. After a meaning glance among each other, the gentlemen imitated their host; the invisible barrier was broken down; and Clarke Jones took his seat as one of them.

The conversation was becoming general, when the lawyer, leaning forward, said, in that peculiar whisper which is more distinct than the ordinary voice:

"Forgive me, Mr. Grantley, for troubling you with a suggestion, but have you tried Black Tarn? A likely place for an accident, you know—a very likely place; and, in the state of your poor lady's mind, nothing was more possible than an accident, or a suicide, down there." He looked at Laurence steadily.

Laurence looked at him as steadily. "Thank you, Mr. Jones, for the hint. I had not thought

of that before. A very likely place indeed. I shall act on your suggestion."

"I shall be glad to be of any use to you," said Clarke Jones, with an unmistakable manner of equality. "Shall I manage this painful business for you, Mr. Grantley? You may trust both my zeal and my discretion," with an emphasis on the last word.

"You are very good, Mr. Jones. If you would be so kind as to institute a search there—a man could be let down with a rope——But my steward will arrange with you all the necessary details." He turned pale as his imagination pictured what would follow. Then, with a quick, sharp glance upward, "Perhaps I had better be with you?" he said.

"Let me advise you not," said Mr. Clarke Jones, slowly. "You may trust me, with confidence. I will do everything as carefully and as discreetly as yourself. You may trust me," he repeated, in a lower voice, and with a meaning pressure of the hand as he went off.

"I never gave that vulgar fellow credit for so much good feeling," said one of the gentlemen.

"Nor I," said another.

"He seems quite a changed man," said the clergyman, with a ghostly sigh.

"Ah!" cried Dr. Downs, sententiously, "there are secrets in physiology not yet discovered!"

That terrible day seemed to Laurence as if it would never end. He knew what awful secret they were going to discover in the depths of that dismal Tarn; he knew the pale features that lay upward, and the tangled hair with the duckweed wreathed about the folds; he knew that the eyes were wide open, looking at him with their dull stare as they had looked in life; and he knew that this ghastly thing would be brought home here to him, where it would lie with those hard, unflinching eyes always wide open, and the pale features bruised and swollen. He knew all the horror of the present moment, and what was being done on the cliffs above the Tarn. He heard the hoarse cries of one to the other, the trampling of the heavy feet, the unwinding of the rope; he heard the waters stirred; he heard the grating of the drag, and the shuddering groan that ran through the crowd when it was lifted to the earth, and men examined it curiously to see if there had been foul play. It seemed to him as if only his body, torpid and inert, remained at the Hall, while his soul and all his perceptions were up on the cliffs above that fatal Tarn, crying out to all the world what fearful crime had been committed there. So he sat for long, long, terrible hours, until the short winter day came to its close, and the black night poured down. But still he sat, without fire or light; his face, rigid and white, turned listening to the window. Then he heard—this time actually and with his living senses heard—the regular tread of many feet; he saw the waving of the torches; he heard the subdued voices of the men, as, tramp, tramp, they came up the broad gravel walk, bringing the dead

thing with them. Through the hall, and up the stairs—the tangled hair dripping at every step, and leaving a trail which the red torchlight turned to a trail of blood—up the stairs and through the passages to her own room, where the old familiar clothes and jewels lay scattered about, as if she had only that moment left them—and then the rough hands laid her gently on the bed, and the wet of the long loose hair and wringing clothes dripped heavily, drop by drop, like blood, upon the floor.

Laurence stood face to face with that ghastly thing. But he must not falter now. The sin that he had done in passion he must not betray by cowardice. He stood the ordeal calmly and courageously. Even Clarke Jones, narrowly watching him—Laurence knowing that he was so watching him—could not detect the quiver of a muscle. He affected no sorrow, made no lamentation; but stood quietly by the bed, looking at the corpse in silence.

"It was well done!" said Clarke Jones, as if speaking to himself; the men answering in their broad northern accent: "Yees, we spaired nae pains!"

The inquest was held, but no kind of evidence was adduced. No one had met the lady, no one had seen her. Her mental condition was notoriously so unsettled as to make an accident or a suicide the most likely thing possible. An open verdict was returned, "Found Drowned;" and Laurence left the inquest room without the shadow of a suspicion having rested on his name. He buried her with the rightful amount of pomp, and Clarke Jones was invited to the funeral, and took a prominent part at it.

Old Mrs. Grantley returned to the Hall. She had lived in town since her unbending daughter-in-law had forced on her so humiliating a retreat; but now she came back in all her proud regality, and undertook the management of affairs as naturally as if there had been no interregnum. Laurence proved the will, administered, and took possession of his late wife's property; and when the lawyer who had drawn up, and knew of the execution of, the second and secret will, came down, all in a blaze and turmoil, to oppose proceedings and institute a search, Mr. Grantley received him with every imaginable courtesy, showed him Annie's papers, opened her secret drawers, gave him access to her boxes, &c., nay, even volunteered a search through his own private drawers and store places as well, eager to have everything investigated and made plain and clear. And as, in spite of all this care, no other will could be found—who knew this so well as Laurence?—not even a scrap of paper expressing last wishes; and as his client was gone, and could bring no more business into his hands; and as Mr. Laurence Grantley was here, and might add hundreds to his income; and as it is always better to conciliate the living than to attend to the desires of the dead—for, is not a live dog better than a dead lion?—the lawyer pronounced himself satisfied, and went back to London, baffled and routed. He felt convinced,

being versed in hidden iniquities, that there was some sinful dealing somewhere; but he had no proof, and without proof, of what use the strongest suspicions?

So, things went on bravely enough. The property was gradually disencumbered, old debts were paid off, old pressure was removed; and once more the sun shone brightly over the house of Grantley, and happiness seemed again possible to Laurence. A white marble monument was erected to the memory of Annie Grantley, and every one said that Mr. Laurence could not have done more than he had done, and that he had acted well and handsomely throughout. He wore his mourning gracefully, and without ostentation; had the proper width of crape, the proper depth of black; while Mrs. Grantley was beyond measure queenly in her maternal sables, which she took care to have made as deep and tragic as custom would sanction.

In the small village of Eagley, Jane Gilbert was taken from the workhouse and comfortably lodged, was given a suit of black and bidden to wear it, no one knowing why she had been so befriended, or for whom she wore her mourning. For Jane Gilbert had not the faintest idea that Annie Grantley was her child; and the secret rested now with Clarke Jones and Laurence. Clarke Jones's mother had been Annie's nurse, and, upon her death-bed, had told her son how that the great heiress of Sir Thomas Sibson, of the Grange, who all the world thought was the daughter of his lady—for he had been married, and his wife was a Lascelles, and had died in Italy; so far Annie had spoken truly—was only the natural daughter of poor Jane Gilbert, a pauper now in the union, whom, when Lady Sibson's maid, Sir Thomas had ruined, according to the way of the Sibsons. The child had been taken from its mother, and given to Nurse Brown to bring up; and Nurse Brown had done her duty by it, and had kept silence, as she was bid, when her master claimed it and put it forth as the daughter of his late wife, and future heiress of what property he could leave. The Grange was entailed—luckily for the rightful heir—else that would have gone to the pauper's daughter too. Sir Thomas died while Annie was young—only eighteen or so—and at his death the small pension regularly granted to Jane Gilbert ceased; and, habits of comparative luxury having induced a certain unthrift and indolence, Jane had fallen from poverty to ruin, and from ruin had slipped into the workhouse. Nurse Brown, on whom the secret lay heavily, wrote to Annie, and told her the whole story; signing the letter in her maiden name, and omitting to say that she was married—had been married many years, and was now the mother of a promising son, well to do in the world. If she had entered into her personal history, Annie would have known better how to trim her sails to the storm when it came. But a letter from Nurse Brown, pleading for an unknown pauper called her mother, touched Annie's heart as little as it would have touched a heart of stone. She had no desire to seek out



Jane, or to tell the world the truth about her birth; so she flung the letter into the fire, and never vouchsafed a reply. And when Mrs. Jones died, twelve years afterwards, her request was still unanswered, and the mother was still living in the parish workhouse. Annie at thirty was no softer than Annie at eighteen; the wife of Laurence Grantley was not more compassionate than the unmarried heiress of the Sibsons had been. Just before her death, Mrs. Jones told her son the story; and then Clarke thought how he saw his way to influence and profit, by making himself and Laurence Grantley co-partners in the secret: so he brought the news to the Hall, as we have seen, and struck the first blow on the wedge which was to raise the whole fabric of his fortunes. And now, by the strangest circumstances, Laurence Grantley and he were still more closely connected; and he had the power to make his bargain what he chose. So, Laurence gave him this affair of Jane Gilbert to manage, as a kind of instalment of the future; and Clarke Jones kept mysterious silence, and gave no hint to any one. He was playing for larger stakes than the mere pleasure of tattling.

## CHAPTER VIII.

LAURENCE accepted his position bravely. If Clarke Jones was not the man to let go a hold once obtained, Laurence was not the man to let the world know he was so held. It was not his way to own to coercion of any kind: he would have worn handcuffs as if they had been ornamental toys, and always made a merit of yielding when he could not resist, thus preserving at least the semblance of free will. He never let Clarke Jones see that he felt himself in his power; indeed, the lawyer was not quite certain that Laurence knew he was in his power, for nothing could make him betray himself. Let Jones probe him as he would, not a muscle ever quivered, not the faintest glance betrayed uneasiness, not the lightest word expressed consciousness. Off-hand, cordial, kindly, he seemed rather to court Clarke's society from choice than to take it as thrust upon him by the untoward force of circumstances. Everything was done so freely, there was such a grace and richness of manner, such a royal kind of familiarity, that Clarke Jones was puzzled: not able to determine to his own satisfaction how much was real and how much simulated in their intercourse. What was real, however, was the good which he determined to get for himself, and the use he would make of his knowledge. Accordingly, he set to work, running his mines here and there, till he had completely honeycombed Laurence Grantley's life, and filled both his hands to overflowing. He got everything he wished; Laurence always forestalling the request, and proposing, apparently out of pure good will, what he knew would be demanded of him. Thus, Clarke Jones coveted the stewardship of the Grantley estates, and Laurence, with consummate tact, provided for Deddham, the faithful old servant who had given him his first lessons in fishing and shooting, and

who loved him like a son: raising him to an apparently higher post with a higher salary, whereby the old man was flattered, not humiliated; and then Clarke Jones was asked to become general agent, with an acting bailiff under him. Then, Warner, the London lawyer, whose family had been the Grantley lawyers for three generations, gradually lost his Grantley business. Bit by bit, it slipped out of his hands into Mr. Jones's, who manipulated it prettily, and what is called "feathered his nest" with it in grand style. But all these transfers were made so naturally that Jones could never say he had put on the screw, and such and such were the results. It was a great power that Laurence had, of making the best of a thing. But he felt his bondage painfully. It was an ever present sense of degradation which at times ate away his very manliness, though he wrapped gay silken bandages round his chains to prevent their clanking audibly, and hummed his prison tunes to lofty words.

The gentlemen in the neighbourhood spoke much of this excessive intimacy between the highest and the lowest, the most refined and the most vulgar of the district. Old Mrs. Grantley loftily remonstrated; but Laurence compressed his lips, and said that he "knew what he was about, and that what he did, was for the best. He allowed no further remark." Strange to say, Mrs. Grantley forbore to renew the conversation. So Clarke Jones drove a thriving trade with his two secrets; got money in every possible manner, legally and illegally—by fair work fairly paid for, and by unfair wages for no work; got Laurence Grantley to back him in speculations of various kinds; got Laurence to introduce him everywhere, and to make him a position unattainable else; got his influence, his credit, his hand; and, on the strength of all this, rose rapidly to prosperity, and was soon suffered to take a recognised place in the society of gentlemen. But vinegar mouths were still made at him, and this last Grantley pill was bitter swallowing to many.

The old Hall had changed mistresses to some good. Queenly and expensive, Mrs. Grantley was a very different person to mean Annie Sibson, who counted her half-crowns like drops of blood, and thought all pleasures that cost money, sinful follies. The old house warmed up again into something of its native brightness. Dinners and balls, luncheon parties, pic-nics, archery meetings, were given in artistic succession: duly regulated by the strictest laws of "mitigated grief," as expounded by Mrs. Grantley. And once more The Family became the centre of gravitating society, the loadstone to which all the floating particles were attracted. May Sefton was a frequent visitor: beautiful May, with her rose-cheeks rounding into brighter beauty, and her blue eyes full of liquid light: May, with the love which had been so long germinating in her heart, now blossoming out over her life, and, from a faucy and a sentiment, becoming a presence and a power: May, in all the rich spring-

tide of her youth, given up to happiness and love. Laurence loved her; she knew it now; and what else was needed to make earth bright as heaven? But Laurence, though he loved and was happy in his love, yet had changed to something less tranquil than his former self—less tranquil than he used to be even during the period of his greatest depression while Annie lived. In outward manner he was the same as ever, suave, frank, popular; but a close observer would have seen how the lines about his face were set and hardened, how his eyes had a searching watchful look as if he were looking and listening for something, how the hair was rapidly changing from rich chestnut brown to dull grey, and how the hands had an ugly habit of clenching themselves, as if clutching at an enemy's throat. But who read signs like these? Medical men and artists, none else; and as the only doctor in the neighbourhood was not extraordinarily observant, and as artists were as much unknown in those parts as birds of Paradise or long-legged flamingoes, all these signs passed unmarked and unnoticed.

That May and Laurence were lovers was known solely to themselves. The only person who might suspect it was Mrs. Grantley; but Mrs. Grantley was discreet, and now that the property was redeemed and it was not incumbent on Laurence to marry a second time for money, she had no objection to his marrying for love. Excepting Mrs. Grantley, then, no one could penetrate the love between them; for Laurence, in society, was cold and reserved, and of all the unmarried women in the place May Sefton was the woman who apparently had least of his regard. If he were cold, Clarke Jones was warm enough; and if he sought diligently to conceal his love, the forward lawyer made no secret of his admiration. Laurence bore this, as he bore everything now, with unflinching self-possession: never showing jealousy or annoyance: showing nothing at all, in fact, but what a thin line of compressed lip, and a burning flush on the pale hard cheek might express.

Yet it was not one of his lightest pains to know, that, but for the extraordinary intimacy between himself and the lawyer, the help he had given towards the consolidation of those low plebeian fortunes, and the social countenance received from the highest family in the neighbourhood, Clarke Jones would not have presumed to raise his eyes to May's with anything like the admiration of an equal. Yet now, to what might he not pretend? And Laurence dared not rise up against him as he longed and burned to do; for were there not chains on his wrists and fetters on his hands, and did not that fearful secret stand between them, like a spectre, paralysing his every limb? Mental pains are oftentimes worse to bear than physical suffering; and Laurence would have gladly exchanged those which beset him now, for any anguish of the flesh which man or demon could have devised. As for May, she was too happy on the one side, and too indifferent on the other, to be very demonstrative, even of her

disgust; so Clarke Jones went blundering on in his rude, bear-like attempts, which amused no one but himself; and if he saw the effect they produced—which he did not always—he did not let his knowledge interfere with his design, but made sure that he would carry all before him, as usual. Clarke Jones had grown dangerously accustomed to success. In this manner above a year passed after Annie's death, when the slow course of time brought round the bright spring, and Life woke up anew.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE death and gloom of winter, and all the terrible associations connected with it, melted away, like the snow on the mountain-tops; and in their stead came spring flowers and sunny skies, and the blessed renewal of all life. And now, was not Laurence happy? With May's dear hand in his, and her loving face pressed against his breast, could he not forget? Could he not bury his dead, once for all, and live in the joy and glory of the hour? For moments, yes; but they were only moments, snatched like golden drops from the rainbow spanning the dark bank of clouds. Yet if not happier, he was more tranquil, for he was planning a future that should withdraw him from the terrible influence over him. Grantley Hall was to be sold, and Laurence and his wife would leave England for ever. It would be no grievous exile in a sunny Italian villa, sitting under the myrtles and the vines, with beautiful May Sefton for his wife. And she would think a desert, paradise enough if it brought them nearer heart to heart, and left them suffering together. Though, indeed, May thought that could be no suffering which gave them to each other.

The birds were singing blithely in the trees, and the skylarks made the fields and meadows loud with song; the wandering airs came laden with odours fresh and pure from the grass and flowers just wet with the soft Spring rain that had been falling in the sunshine; and all nature looked as bright and joyous as if sin had never been born of man, and death and sorrow had never entered the world. They were engaged lovers now, and were soon to be married; but the secret was still to be kept from all the world save the two mothers, and the marriage was to be as private as a stolen one. What cared May? Her life was in his love; her pride, her joy, her happiness, all centred in him, and the outside world was nothing to her.

Yes, that morning Laurence was happy. He forgot the shadow beside him, and lived only in the sunshine: there was no blood in the waters of Black Tarn; no secret chain that bound him as the slave of another; there were no sorrow and no crime in the past, no doubt and no dread in the future. All earth was bright, all life a joy.

Laurence, make the best of this little hour of springtide passed with May under the ancestral lime-trees! It is all that God and Justice can give. Years hence, long blank years hence, you will remember this sunny spring morning, and the scent of the lime blossoms will haunt you for

ever as the message and the word of a lost heaven!

Clarke Jones did not see that Laurence was in love, and only half suspected that May, who was more impulsive, and had no other motive than obedience for concealment, loved him. Laurence carefully concealed his feelings from the lawyer—he had his own good reasons for doing so—and Jones was too inflated with success to read the heart of another man very accurately, or to have his senses sharpened by the fear of rivalry. He had become accustomed to the belief that everything must give way to his wishes; May Sefton's love among the rest.

One day—it was the afternoon of this very spring day, the happiest of all May's life—he stole upon her as she walked, restless with joy, up and down the lane leading to the Hall, recalling every word and look and gesture of that glorious morning, and living over again the divine joy of her hour of betrothal. Startling her from this heaven of thought, Clarke Jones suddenly stood before her. Without a moment's warning, in his rude coarse bull-headed way he told her that he had a mind for her, that he would make good settlements on her, and that she might do worse than take him. He had no grand name like Laurence Grantley's, certainly, but he had an honest one and was a safer man (with a thick spluttering emphasis), and Laurence Grantley would never be husband to her, if that was what she was thinking of—never! And he snapped his fingers in the air.

May's blood was roused. May, all gentleness and kindness, flamed up now, infuriate and inspired by her great love. She spurned the man with the bitterest disgust; hard words rose with dangerous power to her lips; a fierce eloquence possessed her; and Clarke Jones was for a moment overwhelmed at the transformation.

"Ah!" he said at last, drawing a deep breath, "this is because you love Grantley! A word, miss, from me; a word that I could say, and he would be nowhere. A pitiful scoundrel he is—a sneaking dog that I hold in my hand, and could crush—there! like that!" setting his heel on a worm that lay in his path. "Yes, with one word I could crush him like that; and by Jove, if you give me the chance—or the cause—I will!"

"How dare you thus insult me?" cried May, with a passionate gesture.

"I don't insult you, miss. If I speak the truth of Laurence Grantley do I insult *you*? Things have come to a pretty pass! Has that scoundrel been poaching on my manor, I wonder? By Jove, if he has—I want to know my place, miss—"

"Know your place?" interrupted May; "your place is lower than Mr. Grantley's lowest servant! You desecrate his name by speaking it; you are not fit to mention him in any way!" May rushed scornfully away through the Grantley gate.

She met Laurence in the walk. May threw herself into her lover's arms, crying, "Laurence! save me from that monster!"

Her distress, Clarke Jones's excitement and undisguised insolence of manner, told Laurence all. He put May gently away, and bade her go up to his mother in the Hall; then, livid, and with the expression that he had had when his wife had taunted him on the crags above the Tarn, he turned round, seized Clarke Jones, and with the heavy dog-whip in his hand, flogged him. The lawyer struggled to defend himself; but Laurence was the more powerful man; and now, with his long-smothered passions let loose, and his hatred bracing his nerves and muscles, he was desperately strong. Lash on lash, blow on blow, the whole pent-up heart poured out in blows and words of scorn and insult. At last, wearied with his own passion, he flung the wretch heavily to the ground, and strode up the broad gravel-walk towards the house.

Clarke Jones went home, and for the next fortnight was invisible to every one—"laid up by illness," according to report.

The wedding-day came on quickly. All cause of secrecy was now at an end, and Laurence was almost boastful as to publicity. He was not himself through it all; he was excited and defiant; talked loud; talked fast; told all his feelings and intentions in a manner quite unlike his usual reticent pride, and seemed to find a certain strength of hope, a certain comfort of conviction, in reiterating to all what "he was going to do." But it sounded rather like a challenge given to some one, than the natural exposition of a man's own mind. The preparations went on, in the same ostentatious way. It was to be a grander marriage than even the first had been.

All this time Clarke Jones was confined to his own house, suffering severely from fever and general indisposition. But, on the morning of the marriage, and while May, in her bridal dress, was waiting to be taken to church—one arm in a sling, his face strapped and bandaged—he limped to the house, and demanded instant speech with her. A heavy bribe got him admitted to where she sat, alone.

"Miss May," he said, suddenly.

She started up and gave a cry.

"Come! No screams!" he said, insolently; "you are in my power at last! Hear me!" He bent down close to her face. "You are going to be his wife; to be to him what Annie Sibson was; to lie by his side where she lay, and to live on the gold which she brought. One word in your ear: one word to tell you *whom* you marry. Keep still, little bird; see! the very blood has come from your struggles, and is falling from your arm on to your dress! Fie! fie! Blood on your bridal dress? Now keep still, and I'll tell you a pretty little tale I heard one day on the cliffs above Black Tarn—keep still, I say, till I tell you my story."

He bent his lips to her ear and whispered his revelation; then, with a low laugh, cried, "Now go marry Laurence Grantley, with blood upon your bridal dress!" and releasing her suddenly, limped out of the room.

A scream rang through the startled house. The bridesmaids and May's mother rushed to her.

Crouched in a corner, white and scared, her hair fallen loose, her eyes wild and fixed, her pale lips muttering "Murder, murder!" and "Laurence!" and the blood dropping heavily on her dress, they found her. Too late. In three days she died.

Years after, Laurence Grantley was seen, a bent aged withered man, standing on the crags above Black Tarn. The man who saw him—old Deedham's son—spoke to him, but Laurence did not answer, and was never seen again. During that same summer, the waters drying more than usual, a dead man's hand lay uncovered in the Tarn; and men whispered to each other that it was the hand of the former owner of Grantley Hall. No one cared to verify the suspicion, and the grave of the last of the Grantleys is still unfilled in the family mausoleum.

#### MYNHEER VAN PRIG.

WHATEVER could have brought Mynheer van Prig and your humble servant in contact? The world was surely wide enough for Prig and self. What unkind fortune, what capricious fate, what wilful wind, could have blown us together? I could well have done without Van Prig, and he might properly have done without me. I wanted nothing with the man: why couldn't he let me alone? If Van Prig had let me be, I should never have written this paper, and he—on my account at least—would never have been delivered over to the tormentors. Thus two (possible) evils would have been prevented. But the Pascal influences were against us. There was a cohabitation of Sol with the White Dragon in Balneo Mariæ, and the result of the projection was Van Prig. Clotho, Atropos, and Lachesis, ruled otherwise. It was fated that Van Prig and I were to meet, and that we should both be sufferers from our very short acquaintance. May the public be the only parties that will derive any benefit from the disastrous connexion of the non-undersigned with Mynheer van Prig.

He who travels much abroad, and is worth anything as a traveller, will scarcely fail to make himself, to the best of his ability, acquainted with the systems of jurisprudence which prevail in the countries he traverses. Landing in Barataria, one of our earliest visits should be to the plenary court, where his Excellency el Gobernador Don Sancho Panza sits full of wisdom and garlic. On crossing the Styx, the traveller is compelled to put in an appearance before Minos, C.J., and Justices Rhadamanthus and Æacus, in banco. It is true that a great many modes exist of performing this duty, and that the manner of studying the administration of justice in divers countries is infinitely varied. Young Anacharsis is sometimes launched into a lawsuit so soon as he has set foot on Grecian shore; and I have heard of a ferocious tribe of island blackamoors whose strict, but simple, code compels them on a European making his appearance among them to seize

him, try him by a banjo and tambourine head court-martial, and, on his being convicted of being white, to skin him alive, cook, and eat him. Prior to the first great French Revolution, if a foreigner died on the hospitable soil of France, the first intimation of the fact that reached his heirs was accompanied by the consoling intimation that the Most Christian King had condescended to exercise the eminently infamous prerogative known as the *Droit d'Aubaine*, and that his exempts had laid violent hands upon all goods and chattels, moneys and securities, belonging to the foreigner deceased. Again, there are some travellers whom an instinct of cruelty leads to watch and pry into the operation of the criminal law abroad. They are of the family of that horrible amateur of agony, George Selwyn, who, when the wretched Damians was to be tortured, scarified, and dismembered, posted to Paris to witness the concluding bedevilment of the would-be regicide; and, desiring to be as near the scaffold as possible, gave his name to the sentinels who were keeping the crowd back as "Monsieur de Londres." They, knowing that the title "Monsieur de Paris" was shared alike by the archbishop-metropolitan and by the common executioner, thought, reasoning from analogy, that the strange gentleman might be either the Primate of England or else the Sieur Jean Ketch on his travels, and so admitted him within the "inner ring," where he could witness, at his ease, the final atrocities. There are tourists in our days who experience a keen pleasure in hanging about the court of some Egyptian *cadi*, to see some miserable fellow receive the *bastinado*. They pay five-and-twenty francs for the successor of Sanson to exhibit to them the dull red timbers and shining grooves of the guillotine. They go, at Nuremberg, to see the headsman's sword, with the hollow blade that holds quicksilver in its cavity, to drive the momentum from hilt to point; and, in Russia, their valet de place gives them timely intimation of some peculiarly invigorating administration of the stick to refractory servants, or drunken donkey-drivers, in the yard of the police-office: or of some gala day, when the condign punishment of the knot is to be publicly inflicted in the horse-market at the top of the Newskoi perspective.

The master of the ceremonies who introduced me to Mynheer van Prig had Law for his name, and was the criminal law of the constitutional kingdom of Belgium.

Nearly four years have passed since then. I don't exactly know why I had come to Brussels, save that I entertained a very great disinclination to return to England just then. All the spring and summer I had been wandering in the far north of Europe, and I thought I might as well wait until the first days of December, ere I went home. So, Paris having no charms for me at that period, I elected Brussels as a resting-place for eight weeks. I didn't know a soul in the city at first, which was remarkably nice. I discovered an acquaintance one day in the



Place de la Monnaie, whom I suspected to have come over on an excursion trip to some international congress then being held in the capital of King Leopold. Him I discreetly avoided; which was pleasant and convenient. True, when I had been in Brussels about a month I came suddenly across a real friend, who was camping out at the suburb of St. Josse-ten-Noode. I was obliged to go and dine with him and make believe to be intimate with his family; but I soon contrived to get up a snug little quarrel with my friend—a *querelle d'Allemand*, or rather *de Belge*, for we neither of us knew precisely what it was about; and then, after we had abused each other with the worst grace in the world, I was quite alone, which was delightfully humanising. At last it pleased *Mynheer van Prig*—and he hanged to him—to shunt himself across my solitary path.

For a time I enjoyed all the pleasures of a Low Dutch Zimmerman. It was so comfortable to be alone. I wouldn't have anything to do with the bad high-priced dinners at the spurious French restaurants in the *Galerie St. Hubert*, or the jangling tables d'hôte at the great hotels; not I. But I dined royally in the Flemish manner at a little eating-house in a back street, that might have been the main cabin in a Greenland whaler, so greasy was it, and where I had six courses of adipose matter, any quantity of black bread and pickled vegetables, a plank of cheese of which the snell alone would have blown up *Waltham Abbey* if there were cheese instead of powder mills there, and a white wash-hand jug full of *faro beer*, such as would, for its sourness, have set all the grinders of the *Giant Bolivorax*, to say nothing of the teeth of a whole *Port Royal* full of ground sharks, on edge—all for ninepence half-penny. And it didn't make me bilious. I hadn't turned the corner of thirty years then. I played billiards or dominoes every night with people I didn't know, and liked to play with Walloons rather than with Flemings; for the reason, you see, that I understood a little Flemish, and that the Walloon tongue is one which nobody on earth, save the natives and deaf and dumb people, can speak. Sometimes, I went to the *Maison des Brasseurs* on the *Grande Place*, and breakfasted on a "*beuifsteackox*," the orthography by printed placard adopted for the edible known in the country as a *beefsteak*. Sometimes I smoked a pipe on a dingy *estaminet* opposite the corner of the *Rue de l'Étue*, and, looking upon the famous little *Mannekin*, wished I could be appointed his *valet de chambre* to dress him in his three suits a year—how do they get his netherstocks on?—and his cross of *St. Louis*; or that I could be his *homme d'affaires* to manage his handsome revenues in a snug bureau panelled with walnut-wood; and I wondered who the rich old maids and burgomasters could have been who had left legacies and yearly "*rentes*" to the "*plus ancien bourgeois de Bruxelles*." A great haunt of mine was a half-English tavern off the *Montagne de la Cour*, whither grooms, and broken-down baronets,

and quarter-pay captains, and English ralls of every description, came to read the *Times*, and talk about horses and bills, and drink the best Belgian substitute for English gin-and-water. And then I went home to some nice desolate quarters I had at a hairdresser's shop in the *Rue de la Montagne*. The hairdresser was a blind man, and his apprentice used to make faces at him in the intervals of dressing those wigs on the dummies. The hairdresser's wife was ordinarily in tears; when her eyes were dry, she was in a storming passion, and thrashing her children with a "*martinet*." I used to sing *God save the Queen*, in the endeavour to drown their yells, which disturbed the digestion of the six courses and the sour *faro*. My bedroom was like *Mr. Punch's show*; it was tall, narrow, and dark, and had but a half door covered with green baize. I had a charcoal stove in my sitting apartment, and nearly managed to asphyxiate myself with the fumes thereof. I had an effigy of a black *Madonna* with three hands, and a black *bambino* set in silvered copper, with a lamp swinging before it which had come from *Kieff*, and a fur coat that weighed about half a hundred-weight, and a pair of boots four feet high, lined with sheepskin, and with which I used to compare notes at night. I had a quantity of books in half a dozen languages—"Ave, *Tauchnitz!* *Imperator, te saluto!*"—on the floor, and a quantity of loose tobacco on the furniture generally; and I got up and went to bed at all hours; and, if I hadn't paid my rent in advance, I think the landlady must have imagined that I was mad. I had my complaints against her, too; for I am sure she made the pomatum in the vessels she used for cooking the dinner; and the mingled odour of bear's-grease and cabbage-soup was dreadful. I was to do a great deal of writing, and bought a large stock of pens and paper, and seven kinds of ink. I meant to paint some pictures illustrating recent foreign pilgrimages of my own, and I laid in large quantities of pigments and hog's-hair brushes; but I don't think I either wrote or painted much. The major part of my time at home was devoted to smoking, reading, and keeping a minutely accurate journal of the things I hadn't done. A young musical gentleman once came to my hermitage—which was on the fourth floor—with a letter of introduction from *England*; but I leaped up at him like a smoky *Frankenstein*, and soon gave that peaceable but obtrusive fiddler his quietus. Oh, it was a jovial time, a merry time! So merry, indeed, that I was often uncertain in my mind as to whether I should jump for joy and sing continual *Te Deums*, or whether I should pitch myself out of the fourth floor window, and dash my brains out against the flags of the *Rue de la Montagne*.

I owed no money in Brussels—and how, indeed, anybody can get into debt where rent and food are so cheap, and where cigars are three for a penny, puzzles me. Else I might have become acquainted with the swift and sharp *Debtor* and *Creditor Law* of *Belgium*, and have mingled with

another section of English ruffs, in the Maison de Détenation pour Dettes. My "relations" with the police were of the most tranquillising description. I assured a stout gentleman in a glazed cap, at the passport office of the Petits Sablons, that I considered the Emperor Napoleon to be the greatest man this world has seen since Alexander of Macedon; and as I had just returned from the most absolutist country in Europe, I was probably looked upon as a pacific character. So I took my walks abroad, unmolested, and made my first acquaintance with Belgian law one October afternoon, when, ascending the Montagne de la Cour, I witnessed the edifying spectacle of a little ragged boy—a pure Belgian gamin—being arrested by a police agent in plain clothes, for the flagrant misdeed of begging. The tiny criminal had ventured to accost an English lady and gentleman who were coming out of a lace-shop, when a seeming well-to-do bourgeois, with green spectacles and a drab broad-brim, rushed across the road, pursued the small ragamuffin among the wheels of several carriages and the hoofs of a squadron of Belgian heavy cavalry, and, at last, run him down on a pastrycook's door-step. I never saw such an illustration of abject, exhausted terror, as in the boy as he sprawled panting on the step, holding up his ragged little arm as if to avert an expected blow. There was some sympathy evinced among the crowd that immediately collected, and a few murmurs reflecting on "les mouchards" were heard; but the police agent—and a very decent kind of man he seemed—put the case very fairly to us: that his orders were to arrest all vagrants and mendicants, and that the boy was captured, not to be punished, but to be sent to an asylum where he would be educated and cared for, till he was eighteen years of age. He took off his prisoner, and I went on my way: thinking that it was, perhaps, better, after all, to catch up these little beggars and lug them away to a place where they should be fed and taught, than to suffer them shamefully to roam in "all the desolate freedom of the wild ass" about the streets of crowded cities, to grow up into wolves and tigers preying upon the body politic.

I was out late that evening and night, and walked many miles. It must have been near the Porte de Cologne, and at half-past one o'clock in the morning, that I met Mynheer van Prig.

Mynheer van Prig—I can see him now staggering along, and throwing a long lurching shadow in the bright moonlight—was either very tipsy, or else, for purposes of his own, simulated extreme inebriety. He caught hold of posts, and of chairs, and of trees, as he came tacking towards me, and, finally, he drifted up against and caught hold of me. He was at least six feet high—I won't say in his stockings, because subsequent discoveries proved him to be in the habit of wearing sabots without hose. He wore a very ragged blouse, and had a white flat face without beard or moustache, and, to the extent that a dirty Greek cap would admit of examination, without any perceptible hair on his

head. He spoke very thick, which might have been his misfortune only, seeing that he was a Belgian; and he asked me, in execrable French, the way to the Cathedral of St. Gudule.

I told him, with my usual mildness, that he was some two miles distant from that ancient fane; whereupon, with many a reel and hiccup, he suggested that I should treat him with beer or schnaps. I declined; whereupon he cursed me for an Englishman, and lurched away. It was not until he was some ten yards ahead of me, scudding away in the moonlight with a direct swiftness very unlike a tipsy man, that I discovered that this villainous mynheer—he became then and there, and for ever afterwards, to my mind, Van Prig—had picked my pocket.

I had much better have let it alone, but I gave chase. I have run away from a good many things in my time—from love, from happiness, from myself—but I have seldom run after anybody or anything. But I cried havoc, and let slip the dogs of war, after Van Prig: for the rascal had positively stolen all the money I had in the world. I think the available "all" amounted to about five-and-twenty francs, Belgian currency, contained in a morocco porte-monnaie; but this had, in addition, one compartment filled with what North of England people call "bonny money:" an assortment of small change of a special nature which I had picked up during my wanderings. Thus, I had a kreutzer, and a silver groschen, and a Danish rigsdaler, a pfenning, a five kopeck piece, a Hamburg mark, a piece with the effigy of the Hanoverian White Horse, and some minor testoons. Mynheer van Prig had got them all; and as I naturally set store by my five-and-twenty francs, and the pretty little tiny kickshaws of "bonny money," I ran after him.

Mynheer van Prig doubled; and we had an agreeable game of catch 'em who can, on the broad boulevard. I shouted "Police!" and "Au secours!" but all Brussels seemed to have gone to bed. Then, Mynheer van Prig took an unhandsome advantage of his size and my unreadiness, and, butting at me with his large head, very nearly knocked me off my legs. I am ashamed to say that in my ignorance of the noble art of self-defence, I caught hold of my adversary by the ears, and by the scruff of his neck, and by the collar and breast of his blouse, and that I strove to trip his long legs up: hanging on to him, meanwhile, like grim death, and bellowing "Au secours!"

It was destined to be a running fight throughout; for anon, and to my great joy, I descried another figure running towards us. Up he came at last, in a cocked-hat and out of breath, and, mild as the moonbeams, he summoned Mynheer van Prig, in the name of the king and of the law, to surrender.

How did he know that Van P. was the guilty party? I became ashamed of my opponent. There was surely never so rank a coward in the world as Mynheer van Prig. The police-officer was a mere atomy of a sergent de ville; and Prig, to

judge by the size and length of his limbs, might have beaten us both, with one hand tied behind him. But he began, instead, to blubber like a great baby, about his "vamilie."

I explained my loss, but the little policeman seemed to know all about it already. "Ça y est!" "That's it!" seemed his favourite mode of expression. He chuckled Mynheer van Prig almost caressingly under the chin, but shook his head, and said the money was not there. As for the porte-monnaie, it was settled that Prig had thrown it away, as a preliminary proceeding. "So, allous," said the little policeman blithely, "en route!"

He first, with much formality, went through the ceremony of taking the big blubbering Belgian into custody. This he effected, by drawing a tapering little spit of a rapier and collaring Mynheer van Prig—having very nearly to stand on tiptoe to do it. We were admitted into Brussels by the men on duty at the Porte de Cologne, where the policeman showed his prize, and was complimented by the officials in Flemish. To me he spoke very decent French.

By this time I was heartily sick of Mynheer van Prig, and wanted, if possible, to get my money back, and go to bed. I made proposals that P. should restore the gems, or rather coins, of which he had robbed me, should receive a kicking, and depart in peace; but this was a plan of which, though Van assented, the politicoeman would not hear. We must go before the commissary. It was a serious affair.

"And one that will be five years for thee, Gewaert," observed the policeman, cheerfully, to his prisoner, as we clattered down the empty streets.

The Mynheer, whose christian or surname might have been Gewaert, but who to me could be nothing but Van Prig, only gave some inarticulate moanings by way of reply.

"Bad seed, bad grain," the minister of justice went on, sententiously. "Thy mother stole cat-skins. Thy father wore rings on his legs for seven and ten. Thy sister is inscrite. Bad subjects, all. But Monsieur le Commissaire is about to rub thine ears for thee, galopin."

It is a fact, that when we reached the bureau of the commissary of police, and that functionary had got out of bed, and had come down stairs to his murky office in a flannel dressing-gown and a velvet skull-cap, and the charge had been briefly explained to him, that he so far put into practice the figurative language of the policeman concerning the rubbing of Mynheer van Prig's ears, as to seize him by the two shoulders and shake that rascal violently.

"Ah gredin! Ah caners! Ah pied-plat! Ah saute-ruisseau! Ah voyou!" exclaimed the commissary, shaking his head and Mynheer van Prig at the same time. "We have got thee at last, have we? Thou wilt sell forged contremarques on the Place de la Monnaie, wilt thou? Thou wilt be a colporteur of seditious pamphlets?"

Now we have thee as a filou. Bon. Let him be peeled (qu'on l'épluche)," he concluded.

And upon my word they proceeded to "peel" Mynheer van Prig; and very much like a forked radish he looked when every rag—and they were few in number—he had on, was peeled off. Four five-franc pieces, presumably mine, and the whole of my "bonny money," of which I had "préalablement" given a description to the commissary, were found in the left sabot of Mynheer van Prig. There could be no doubt about that person's guilt.

The defence he pleaded, varied in its nature. First, he said that he had never seen me before; then, that he was as innocent as the child unborn; then, that it was somebody else; then, that I had given him the money to drink the health of the martyrs of Belgian liberty; finally, he burst into a fresh flood of tears, and virtually confessing his offence, called it a "betite indiscretion."

The commissary stigmatised his "voie de défense" as "odious." Mynheer van Prig was permitted to resume his peel, and was then locked up—somewhere underground, I presume. I signed a number of documents, bade the commissary good night, and was free to depart: when I made the agreeable discovery that my latch-key had disappeared. Either Van had stolen that too, and had thrown it away, or I had lost it during my short struggle with him. Most of the houses in Brussels have no concierges, but have street doors in the English fashion. I did not like to knock up the hairdresser's family; I was doubtful as to my reception—for the funds taken from Van Prig had been rigorously impounded by the commissary—at an hotel; and I was very glad, as an alternative to walking about the streets, to accept the offer of the policeman to make interest with the chef d'escouade at the guard-house at the Hôtel de Ville. There was, in an immense apartment, a roaring fire in an antique chimney here, and I dozed on a wooden camp-bed till seven in the morning: now fancying that I saw the Duke of Aïva warming his toes by the blaze; now, that the nodding police-agents were the night watch that Rembrandt painted.

For a whole fortnight afterwards, I heard nothing whatever of Mynheer van Prig. The commissary had told me that when justice required my presence I should receive a "sommation;" and I dreaded the arrival of the missive. For fourteen days, however, as I have said, there were no signs of proceedings in re Prig. Yet the Mynheer haunted me. I had never prosecuted anybody before, and I hope I never shall again. I groaned in the spirit perpetually, about Mynheer van Prig. By night and by day his gaunt figure, his fat white face, floated before me. Prig was my Bottle Imp; and it was with a sensation, after all this horror, approaching relief, that on returning home one day, I learned from the landlady that a huissier had been after me with a sommation.

I think the entire hairdresser's family must

have concluded that I had committed some dreadful crime: for the citation, or whatever it was, had to be served personally, and the usher dodged me about, all that afternoon, before he could succeed in thrusting into my hand a species of placard, printed on coarse grey paper, and stamped all over in variously-coloured inks, bidding me appear on a certain day before the Judge of Instruction of the First Tribunal of the Court of Assizes of Brabant, to give preliminary evidence against Jacobus Hendrik Vanderscamp, otherwise Gewaert, otherwise "Doppelfanger," otherwise "Pinchgelt," otherwise—and to me eternally—Mynheer van Prig.

I got this citation on a Saturday; on the Monday—the intermediate day was one of torture—I attended at ten o'clock in the morning at the Palais de Justice. In the back yard of that rambling whitewashed edifice I found a lonely door, giving access to a flight of filthy stone stairs, up three flights of which, an attenuated inscription informed me, were the "Cabinets de MM. les Juges d'Instruction." Previous to this, I had been allowed to cool my heels in a dreadful antechamber, much resembling a pauper dead-house; for it appeared there had been on the preceding evening a great robbery at a jeweller's in the Place de la Monnaie, and the Judge of Instruction, who was to take cognisance of myself against van Prig, had gone down to the jeweller's in order to take "informations" on the spot. I had the pleasure, too, of meeting the little policeman, who called my miserable matter "l'affaire de la Porte de Cologne," making as much of it as though it had been a gunpowder plot; and who in a whisper informed me that van Prig had "arrived" and was "la-bas," indicating the locked door of a seeming coal-cellar. He also obligingly opened the door of the prisoners' van, which, having discharged its passengers, was waiting in the court-yard, and explained its internal economy to me. We groped about the narrow corridor of the carriage, and with a shudder I peeped into the cupboard with its narrow seat and a ventilator in the roof, which, but half an hour since, had held the captive body of Mynheer van Prig.

The tinkling of a little bell at length summoned me to the presence of the Juge d'Instruction: whom I found to be a portly magistrate, with a bald head, a black satin waistcoat, and a large bunch of seals. He was sitting in a comfortable apartment, half office, half sitting-room, and at the table opposite to him sat his greffier, or secretary, likewise portly, black satin waistcoated and gold-sealed, but not bald headed. He looked like the judge's nephew, and he probably stood in that degree of relationship to him. I was bowed to, and offered a chair when I entered, and then judge and greffier, or uncle and

nephew, began to chat about the jewel robbery, and politics, and theatricals, and the extraordinary fact of my being an Englishman. Now and then I was asked a casual question relative to my transactions with Van Prig; but at the end of some five-and-twenty minutes' desultory conversation, I was astounded to hear the greffier—who had been apparently scribbling caricatures on his blotting pad while we were talking—clear his voice and read a high-flown narrative, in the first person—my own—of the "Affaire de la Porte de Cologne." I think the exertion commenced thus:

"I am unable to state with any degree of certainty whether it was on the right or the left side of the row of poplars opposite the Porte dite de Cologne, that on the night, or rather morning of—"

He went on, for I am sure half an hour. Then, the pair having worked their wicked will on me, told me that I was to come again that day week, to be confronted with the "prévenu," not yet "accusé" Van Prig; and that then I was to prepare myself to attend the Court of Assizes of Brabant, of which the sittings would probably take place one month thence. Then they gave me tenpence—a franc—for my "time." This I gratefully accepted, as an instalment on my five-and-twenty francs, and my "bonny money."

It was my own fault that I never recovered my property. I wonder where it is now, and what they did with Van Prig! I know perfectly well what I did. I happened to have a second passport in my possession, a right good Foreign-office one. The first, a mere Black Eagle affair, I allowed to slumber peacefully in the custody of the police, in its pigeon-hole at the Petits Sablons. I went home, packed up my needments, made the landlady a present of the three-handed Madonna, purchased a lot of bear's-grease as a bonus for not stopping longer, and by the eight o'clock train from the Station des Bogards started for the town of Lille, in France. The tables were turned, and I had run away from Mynheer van Prig.

Was he convicted on the strength of my high-flown narrative? Was I condemned "en contumace" for cutting the prosecution, so far as I was concerned, "short?" Did van Prig get off scot free? I have never been informed. I have passed through Brussels once since, on my way to the Rhine, but I didn't call upon "MM. les Juges d'Instruction" in their cabinets. I have had my pocket picked, too, occasionally, at Epsom, in the Strand, and on railway platforms, but I am delighted to say that the British Mynheer van Prig has always been clever enough, in my case, to defy pursuit and evade discovery, and that I have never since been subjected to the intolerable nuisance of prosecuting him.